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## THE SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ.

Done into English by

ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.,

AND

EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

The year A.D. 1010 saw the completion of the Sháhnáma, the great Persian epic. Its author, the poet Firdausí, spent over thirty laborious years in its composition, only to experience, when the task had been achieved, a heart-breaking disappointment well worthy of inclusion in any record of the calamities of authors. His work has survived the test of time, and by general consent is accounted to be one of the few great epics of the world. Geographically, and in some other respects, it may be said to stand half-way between the epics of Europe and those of India. In its own land it has no peer, while in construction and subject-matter it is unique. Other epics centre round some heroic character or incident to which all else is subservient. In the Sháhnáma there is no lack either of heroes or of incidents, but its real hero is the ancient Persian people, and its theme their whole surviving legendary history from the days of the First Man to the death of the last Sásánian Sháh in the middle of the seventh century of our era. It is the glory of the Persian race that they alone among all nations possess such a record, based as it is on their own traditions and set forth in the words of their greatest poet. In another sense, too, the Sháhnáma is unique. The authors of the other great epics tell us little or nothing of their own personalities or of their sources of information. Their works are fairy palaces suspended in mid air; we see the result, but know not how it was achieved. The author of the Sháhnáma takes us into his confidence from the first, so that in reading it we are let into the secret of epic-making, and can apply the knowledge thus gained to solve the problem of the construction of its great congeners. To the student of comparative mythology and folk-lore, to the lover of historic romance or romantic history, and to all that are fond of tales of high achievements and the gests of heroes, the Sháhnáma is a storehouse of rich and abundant material. To set forth a complete presentation of it with the needful notes and elucidations is the object of the present translation, made from two of the best printed texts of the original—that of Vullers and Landauer, and that of Turner Macan.

THE  
SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY  
ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.  
AND  
EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

*"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day  
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,  
But storm and rain shall never mar what I  
Have built—the palace of my poetry."*

FIRDAUSÍ

VOL. VII

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## PREFATORY NOTE

The publication of this translation has advanced sufficiently to enable me to state that it will be completed in nine volumes, the last of which will include a General Index to the whole work.

E. W.



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# THE SHÁHNÁMA

VOL. VII.

*b*

## ABBREVIATIONS

- C.—Macan's edition of the *Sháhnáma*  
L.—Lumsden's            do.  
P.—Mohl's               do.  
T.—Tíhrán               do.  
V.—Vullers'             do.
- BLRE. History of the Lower Roman Empire. By J. B. Bury.
- DZA. Professor Darmesteter's Trans. of the Zandavasta in the  
Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Parts<sup>1</sup> and  
pages.
- EHI. The History of India as told by its own Historians. By  
Sir H. M. Elliot, K.C.B.
- EP. Eastern Persia, an Account of the Journeys of the  
Persian Boundary Commission, 1870-71-72.
- GDF. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman  
Empire. By Edward Gibbon, Esq. With Notes by  
Dean Milman and M. Guizot. Edited, with additional  
Notes, by William Smith, LL.D.
- GIP. Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie . . . von Wilh.  
Geiger und Ernst Kuhn.
- HS. Syntagma Dissertationum quas olim auctor doctissimus  
Thomas Hyde S.T.P. separatim edidit.
- JFB. The earliest English version of the Fables of Bidpai . . .  
now again edited and induced by Joseph Jacobs.
- MHP. History of Persia. By Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B
- MM. Maçoudi: Les Prairies d'Or. Texte et Traduction par  
C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.
- NIN. Das Iranische Nationalepos von Theodor Nöldeke.

<sup>1</sup> The second edition of Part I is referred to unless otherwise specified.

- NPS. Nöldeke: Persische Studien. II. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. CXXVI. Band.
- NT. Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden . . . von Th. Nöldeke.
- RM. The Rauzat-us-safa ; or, Garden of Purity . . . By . . . Mirkhond . . . Translated . . . by E. Rehatsek.
- RSM. The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy. By George Rawlinson, M.A.
- WPT. Dr. E. W. West's Translation of the Pahlavi Texts in the Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Parts and pages.
- ZT. Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-Yezid Tabari, traduite . . . Par M Hermann Zotenburg.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

*a* as in "water."

*i* as in "pique."

*ü* as in "rude."

*a* as in "servant."

*i* as in "sin."

*u* as in "foot."

*ai* as in "time."

*au* as in *ou* in "cloud."

*g* is always hard as in "give."

*kh* as *ch* in the German "buch."

*zh* as *z* in "azure."

IV

THE SÁSÁNIAN DYNASTY

*(Continued)*



## BAHRÁM GÚR

HE REIGNED SIXTY-THREE YEARS

## ARGUMENT

Bahrám's accession and inaugural measures. His adventures, amorous and otherwise, among his subjects. His relations with foreign potentates. His instructions to his officials, and remission of taxation. His introduction of the Gipsies into Írán, and his death.

## NOTE

Bahrám Gúr (Varahran V., A.D. 420-438) is said by Tabarí and Mas'údí to have been twenty years old at the time of his accession.<sup>1</sup> According to Tabarí he reigned either eighteen or twenty-three years.<sup>2</sup> Mas'údí says the latter.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand Mír Khánd, who tells us that he followed the most generally received account, perhaps Firdausí's own, states that Bahrám reigned sixty-three years.<sup>4</sup> No doubt popular tradition lovingly prolonged to the utmost the reign of this Sháh who, like James V. of Scotland, was a "King of the Commons." The poet was at no loss for material in this part of his work, and the reign is the most diverting in the Sháhnáma. Its interest with regard to the question of the provenance of the *Arabian Nights* has been noted already.<sup>5</sup> As is to be expected in the circumstances the subject-matter is largely legendary, though some authentic features have been preserved, and there can be little doubt but that Bahrám's own character as depicted by Firdausí is in the main historically correct. He fulfilled the promises made by him when a candidate for the throne,

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 98; MM, ii. 190.<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 112.<sup>3</sup> MM, *id.*<sup>4</sup> RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 362.<sup>5</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 250.

but gave himself up largely to pleasure, though this does not seem to have impaired his activities at critical moments. He appears, too, to have been fortunate in his administrators. His chief minister, Mihr Narsi, who is not to be confounded with Narsi, the Sháh's brother, and three of his sons were at the head of affairs. One was the principal, or nearly so, of the official hierarchy, another was chief superintendent of the taxes, and the third was commander-in-chief.<sup>1</sup> Mihr Narsi and his father Buráza are stated to have held office under Yazdagird, Bahrám's father, and the former was reappointed chief minister when Yazdagird, Bahrám's son, came to the throne.<sup>2</sup> He was himself a prince and an Arsacid, so it would seem that the supplanted family had regained a great position for itself under the new dispensation, and that the state of things fully justified the pronouncement put by later legend into the mouth of Kaid.<sup>3</sup> Bahrám Gúr began his reign with a persecution of the Christians, which led to war with the Eastern Roman Empire. There is a slight allusion to such a war in the poem,<sup>4</sup> but the chief incident recorded to have taken place is a pacific one.<sup>5</sup>

§§ 1 and 2. Bahrám devotes the first days of his reign to carrying out his promises of reform made before his accession,<sup>6</sup> and to the relief of taxation.

§§ 3-16. We have here a series of popular legends of Bahrám's adventures when going about unrecognised among various classes of his subjects.<sup>7</sup> The story of the miser occurs twice.<sup>8</sup>

§§ 19-22. We have here the story of Bahrám's most famous exploit, which is historical, though as much cannot be said of the various details with which popular appreciation has embellished it. Historically, the foes over whom Bahrám won his great triumph were the Haitálians, or White Huns.<sup>9</sup> This is clear on Firdausi's own showing when he comes to the reign of Píruz.<sup>10</sup> Later on again, in the reign of Núshírwán, ample distinction is made between the subjects of the Khán of Chín and the Haitálians.<sup>11</sup> In substituting the former for the latter on this occasion Firdausi errs in good company. Tabarí, Mas'údí, and Mír Khánd all name the Turks as the enemy,<sup>12</sup> and since they did not come upon the scene for another century and more,<sup>13</sup> we learn approximately the

<sup>1</sup> NT, pp. 106, 108 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> ZT, ii. pp. 122, 127; NT, pp. 113.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. vi. pp. 256, 267.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 84. <sup>5</sup> See p. 100 *seq.*

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 406.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 250.

<sup>8</sup> §§ 4 and 15 *seq.*

<sup>9</sup> See Vol. i. p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> See p. 164 *seq.*

<sup>11</sup> See p. 328 *seq.*

<sup>12</sup> NT, p. 99; MM, ii. 190; RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 357.

<sup>13</sup> See Vol. i. p. 20.

earliest date at which the story of Bahrám's exploit could have been edited in its existing form. According to the Persian Tabarí<sup>1</sup>—the version adapted from the original Arabic by Bal'ami, the minister of the Sámánid prince Mansúr, son of Núh (A.D. 961–976), about A.D. 963—the Khán was put to flight, according to the Arabic<sup>2</sup> slain in the battle by Bahrám's own hand. Both agree that the Khátún, or wife of the Khán, was taken prisoner and sent to serve in the famous Fire-temple at Shíz, whither Bahrám had gone to pray for success in his expedition.<sup>3</sup> According to the Arabic Tabarí, Bahrám, as an act of thanksgiving for his victory, relieved his subjects of taxation for three years.<sup>4</sup> This probably is the popular version of the fact that great reforms in that connexion were effected during his reign, but they could not have been justified, one would think, to the extent stated by the amount of plunder taken from the Haitálians, and still less to the extent described in the Sháhnáma, which affirms that he almost reformed taxation away altogether. It may be added that the various accounts of Bahrám's expedition against the Haitálians are in substantial accord though they differ in detail, e.g. as to how far the enemy had advanced at the time of the battle, the route that Bahrám followed in his march, and the number of troops that he took with him.

§ 24. Bahrám's war with the Eastern Roman Empire, in which he was not very successful, came to an end in A.D. 422, but Firdausí (§ 19) makes it synchronise with that against the Haitálians which, according to the Persian Tabarí,<sup>5</sup> took place five years later. Next we hear of an envoy sent by Cæsar ( §§ 19, 23), and then of his belated audience with the Sháh. The points discussed are not the terms of peace, but certain "hard questions,"<sup>6</sup> and it is only incidentally that the envoy mentions that Rúm is ready to pay tribute to Irán. We have a similar case in the reign of Núshírwán when the Rája of Hind sends the game of chess to that Sháh, who returns the compliment with the game of nard,<sup>7</sup> while in the next volume we shall find the disgraced counsellor Búzurjmihr regaining the favour of the same Sháh by his success in solving another problem set by Cæsar.

§§ 26–38. For instances in the Sháhnáma of kings going incognito to visit foreign courts, see Vol. vi. pp. 325, 335. In the Arabic Tabarí, Bahrám's motive for visiting Hind is to see whether by annexing a portion of it he could lighten the taxes of his own

<sup>1</sup> ZT, ii. 120.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 86; ZT, ii. 121; NT, 104.

<sup>4</sup> NT, 105.

<sup>5</sup> ZT, ii. 119.   <sup>6</sup> As to which see p. 102 seq.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 384 seq.

subjects.<sup>1</sup> Unlike his expedition against the Khán of Chín, as Firdausí puts it, and historically against the Haitálians, the one to Hind appears to be wholly fabulous. It is given, however, at length by Tabarí and Mír Khánd, and mentioned by Mas'údí.<sup>2</sup>

It will be seen that Bahrám in the course of his well meant efforts to promote the welfare of his subjects does not find it quite so easy as he expected to make everybody happy by legislation.

§ 39. Professor Nöldeke is inclined to consider Bahrám's importation of Gipsies from Hind to Irán historical.<sup>3</sup> The details of course belong to the province of popular legend, but are delightfully characteristic of both parties concerned. The Gipsy language appears to be a debased form of Hindústání. According to Mír Khánd the Gipsies intermarried with the Persians, and the Jats were said to be their offspring. Consequently nearly every Jat is a musician.<sup>4</sup>

§ 40. Firdausí is almost alone in his statement that Bahrám Gúr died in his bed. The common account is that he was killed when out hunting by falling into one of the underground water-courses, so common in Persia, and that his body never was recovered. Popular tradition places the scene of his death in a valley between Shíráz and Ispahán and known as the "Vale of Heroes," where there are numerous springs supposed to be intercommunicating and of great depth. Sir John Malcolm states that one of his escort was drowned in 1810 when bathing in the identical spring in which Bahrám is said to have perished.<sup>5</sup> Tabarí lays the scene of the accident in Media, and it took place, if it took place at all, probably not far from Hamadán at a spot called, according to Dinawarí, Dái Marj. Nöldeke, however, considers that the whole story was made up to account for the nickname "Gúr" bestowed upon Bahrám. The word in question means both "onager" and "tomb."<sup>6</sup> The same collocation of letters also means a "Fire-worshipper," and it is possible that some Muhammadan translator from the Pahlaví may have thought fit to despatch the guebre to the grave.

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* RM, I, ii. 360; MM, ii. 191.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 99 *note*.

<sup>4</sup> RM, I, ii. 357.

<sup>5</sup> MHP, i. 94 and *note*.

<sup>6</sup> NT, 103 and *note*.

## § I

*How Bahrám ascended the Throne, charged the Officers,  
and wrote Letters to all the Chiefs*

Whenas Bahrám Gúr sat upon the throne  
 The sun acclaimed him while the Sháh adored  
 The Maker—the all-seeing, watchful World-lord,  
 The Lord of victory and majesty,  
 The Lord of increase and of loss—then said :—  
 “ From Him have I received the throne and crown,  
 For He hath fashioned fortune, and my hopes  
 And fears are all in Him. I give Him thanks  
 For all His benefits ; do ye too praise Him,  
 And strive to keep His covenant unbroken.”

C. 1.

The Iránians answered : “ We are girt for service.  
 May this crown prove right glorious to the Sháh,  
 And may his heart and fortune live for ever.”

Their praises done, all scattered gems before him.  
 Thus said Bahrám : “ O chiefs experienced  
 In daily good and ill ! we all are slaves,  
 And God is One, sole-worthy to be worshipped.  
 From fear of evil days we will secure you,  
 And not expose you to malignant Need.”

He spake. They rose and homaged him anew.  
 They spent the night in converse, and at sun-rise  
 The Sháh sat peacefully upon his throne,  
 The Iránians came to audience, and he said :—  
 “ Ye chieftains famed and favoured by the stars !  
 Put we our trust in God and joy in Him,  
 Boast not and root out of the world our hearts.”

He spake and then those Glories of his court—  
 His chiefs—called for their steeds. The Sháh, the  
 third day,  
 Sat on the throne, and said : “ Religious usage

Must be observed. We witness to God's being,  
And make our souls familiar with the Faith.  
There is a Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell,  
And we can not escape from good and ill.  
Ascribe not Faith or knowledge to the man  
That doubteth of the Day of Reckoning."

The fourth day, donning on the ivory throne  
The well-loved crown, he said : " Men, not my  
treasures,

Are my delight. This Wayside Inn I ask not,  
And grudge not going, for the other world  
Is everlasting and this transitory.<sup>1</sup>  
Abstain from greed and trouble not thyself."

The fifth day he said thus : " I have no joy  
In others' toils for mine aggrandisement ;  
We toil in quest of jocund Paradise ;  
He that hath sown but seed of good is blest."

The sixth day said he to his subjects : " Never  
May we ensue defeat ; we will protect  
Our troops from foes and make malignants tremble."

The seventh day, when he took his seat, he said :—  
" Ye chiefs wise, wary, and experienced !  
Since with the vile we practise villainy  
We will have conversation with the wise.  
Ye that are cold to me shall fare still worse  
Than with my sire, but ye that do my will  
Must not experience sorrow, pain, and toil."

The eighth day, when he took his seat, he bade  
Call Jawánwí of those about the court,  
And said to him : " To every mighty man,  
To every chief and clime, indite for me  
A letter couched in just and loving terms,  
And say : ' Bahrám hath mounted on the throne  
With joy—a lord of bounty and of right,  
A shunner of all fraud and knavery—

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

For he hath Grace and stature, love and justice :  
 The Judge all-holy is in all his thoughts.  
 "I will accept," he saith, "the obedient,  
 But fault-condoning maketh faults increase.  
 I sit upon my glorious father's throne,  
 I keep the customs of just Tahmúras,<sup>1</sup>  
 And treat all justly howsoe'er perverse.  
 I will be juster than mine ancestors,  
 And guide you to the Faith—that of Zarduhshht,  
 The prophet—quitting not my fathers' path.  
 I put the Faith of old Zarduhshht before me ;  
 The way of that true prophet is mine own.  
 Be ye all sovereign in your own affairs,  
 And guard your marches and your loyalty,  
 Kings of your children and your women-folk :  
 Blest is the man that is both wise and pure.  
 If God accord us life and favouring stars  
 We will not fill our treasury with gold ;  
 Such treasures keep the poor in travail. Read  
 This joyful letter which assureth you  
 Of lasting wealth and honour. To all kings  
 Our greeting, most to those whose warp and woof  
 Are love."'"

They sealed the letters and made choice  
 Of glorious envoys. Archmage, man of lore,  
 And wary cavalier, those letters bore.

§ 2

*How Bahrám pardoned the Fault of the Írániáns, farewelled  
 Munzir and Nu'mán, and remitted the Írániáns' Arrears  
 of Taxes*

Next day when Sol rose, when the hills bulked large,  
 And sleep was broken, to Munzir there came

<sup>1</sup> For Tahmúras see Vol. i. p. 125.

C. 1490

A panic-stricken throng and said to him :—  
 “ Make intercession for us with the Sháh  
 To pardon our offences, for the crimes  
 Of Yazzagird so wrought us that the blood  
 Froze in the nobles’ hearts ! So much of foul  
 In word and deed, iniquity, distress,  
 And anguish chilled our hearts toward Bahrám  
 Because we suffered so beneath his sire.”

Munzir’s warm pleadings mollified the Sháh,  
 Who being just and noble pardoned all,  
 Whate’er the fault. He decked the imperial palace,  
 And all the good and great resorted thither.  
 When they had got the place of majesty  
 In readiness they seated there the worthy,  
 In every place they spread the board and called  
 For wine and harp and minstrelsy. Next day  
 Another crowd assembled, yet the chief  
 Was wearied not of giving. On the third  
 There were both revels and festivities,  
 And grief was banished from the world-king’s palace.  
 He told the offices done by Nu’mán  
 And by Munzir—those men of stainless birth—  
 On his behalf, and all the chiefs acclaimed  
 Those desert dwellings and those men of war.  
 The Sháh next oped his treasury and filled  
 His palace with brocade and gold, steeds, trappings,  
 Mail-coats and scents <sup>1</sup> and gems of every hue.  
 He gave all to Nu’mán and to Munzir,  
 And Jawánví told o’er to them the gifts.  
 None matched the Sháh in bounty and in travail.  
 He gave the other Arabs many presents,  
 So that they left the royal halls, rejoicing.  
 He then had brought a royal robe of honour,  
 A steed, and raiment of a paladin ;  
 These gave they to Khusrau, made much of him,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And seated him upon the glorious throne.  
Then, turning from Khusrau,<sup>1</sup> the king of kings,  
Descending from his throne, approached the seat  
Where sat Narsí—a prince, his younger brother,  
And one with him in heart and tongue. He made  
Narsí the captain of the host to set  
The land in order, gave up to his keeping  
The host at large, and ravished all the realm  
With bounty, oped the treasury, and paid  
The troops who gladdened with dínárs. The Sháh,  
That man of lore, then bade Gushasp, the scribe,  
With prudent Jawánví, the chief accountant,  
Approach, and ordered them to cancel all  
Arrears of taxes for the Iránians.

These two wise scribes went to their registers,  
And in this matter called in aid Kaiwán  
Because he was the expert of the day,  
And kept the world's statistics in his breast.  
They added up the sum of the arrears,  
And found it ninety and a hundred times  
Three hundred thousand drachms.<sup>2</sup> These he forgave  
And burnt the registers, and all Írán  
Rejoiced thereat. Whenas all folk were ware  
Of that event they praised him mightily.  
They all flocked to the Fire-fanes, to the halls  
Where New Year's Day and Sada feast were kept,  
Flung musk upon the Fire and blessed Bahrám,  
The Sháh. Thereafter he dispatched officials  
To go about the world. He sought and gathered  
Within a certain city all the exiles  
Of Yazdagird that thus the monarch's letter  
Might reach those noble Persians, and inquire  
Their wishes, sent each chief a robe of honour,  
And gave to each a province that befitted  
His station. Noble, archimage, and marchlord,

2 Id.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 215, note.

Whoever heard Bahrám's deliverance,  
 All visited his court with open hearts,  
 And blithe of countenance. He bade each suitor  
 Repair to the high priest and, when the world  
 Had recognised his bidding, he let stand  
 A herald at his gate thus to proclaim :—  
 “ Ye subjects of the watchful Sháh ! abstain  
 From sorrow and from sin, and praise henceforth  
 Him through whose justice earth is prosperous.  
 Take refuge from the world with God alone,  
 For He possesseth all and helpeth all.  
 The man that giveth heed to our command,  
 Not turning from our path and fealty,  
 To him will we increase our benefits,  
 And clear our mind of hate and covetise ;  
 But whosoever shunneth what is just  
 Shall suffer retribution at our hands.  
 If God hereafter shall vouchsafe us strength,  
 And matters turn out to our heart's content,  
 We will add benefit to benefit,  
 And ye shall utter praise on our account.”

At these words all the people of Irán  
 Went full of joy and bright of countenance,  
 And, as the sovereignty became secure,  
 Joy waxed and sorrow minished, while the Sháh  
 In feasting, horsemanship upon the Ground,  
 In sport and polo, full employment found.

### § 3

*How Bahrám went to the House of Lambak, the Water-carrier, and became his Guest*

C. 1492

It happened that Bahrám Gúr went one day  
 With certain warriors to hunt the lion.

An old man, staff in hand, drew near to him,  
 And said : " God-fearing Sháh ! within our city  
 There are two men, one rich, the other poor.  
 Now Baráhám, the Jew, a miscreant knave,  
 Is rich in silver and in gold. Lambak,  
 The water-carrier, is of noble nature,  
 Fair-spoken, hospitable."

## So Bahrám

Inquired about the two, their words and ways.  
 A worthy said : " Lambak, the water-carrier,  
 O great, famed, noble king ! is generous,  
 Doth keep a table, and is well disposed.  
 He passeth half the day in water-carrying,  
 The other half in entertaining guests,  
 And leaveth nothing over for the morrow,  
 While Baráhám is but a barren Jew,  
 And grasping, and his greed should be exposed.  
 He hath drachms, treasure, and dínárs, brocades,  
 And goods of all kinds, but none seeth his bread,  
 And he is ever wrathful at a guest." <sup>1</sup>

The Sháh then bade a herald : " Go, proclaim  
 Before the court : ' To every one concerned :  
 The water of the water-carrier,  
 Lambak, is bad to drink.' "

## He stayed till Sol

Grew pale, then mounted a fleet steed and came,  
 Like wind, toward the dwelling of Lambak,  
 Knocked with the ring against the door, and cried :—  
 " A captain of the Iránian host am I,  
 The night is dark, and I have far to go.  
 Let me lodge here to-night. I will behave  
 With honour and discretion."

## Then Lambak,

Pleased with the voice of one that spake so fairly,  
 Made answer straight : " Come in, O cavalier !

<sup>1</sup> This line is inserted from P.

And may the king approve thee. If ten others  
Were with thee it were better : each had been  
A moon above my head."

Then Sháh Bahram

Dismounted, and Lambak saw to the steed.  
He gladly rubbed it down and haltered it,  
Then, when Bahram was seated, ran and brought  
A chess-board <sup>1</sup> and made shift to furnish food,  
And all things needful, saying : " Noble sir !  
Put by the chess-men and begin thy meal." <sup>2</sup>

C. 1493

The eating done, the host in high delight  
Brought out a cup of wine. The Sháh was all  
Amazement at that feast of his, kind speech,  
And cheery mien, passed night there, and at dawn  
Woke at the salutation of Lambak,  
Who said : " Thy steed, good sooth, fared ill last  
night.  
Stay just this one day with me, and if thou  
Wouldst have a comrade we will summon one,  
And find the needful. Joy with me one day."

The king made answer to the water-carrier :—  
" I have not much on hand to-day."

Lambak

Departed, taking divers water-skins,  
But nobody appeared to buy his water.  
In dudgeon he put off his vest and, taking  
His porter's knot and bucket in his arms,  
Went and procured instead at the bázár  
Meat and dried curds, and in due course put on  
The pot. His guest took note of all his trouble.  
Lambak prepared the meal ; they ate and drank,  
And had another sitting. All that night  
Bahram had wine in hand ; Lambak too loved it.

<sup>1</sup> According to the poet's own showing later on, chess was not introduced into Persia till the reign of Núshírwán. See p. 384 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Couplet omitted.

When it was day he hurried to Bahrám,  
 And said : " Be merry night and day, and franked  
 From trouble, grief, and toil. Consort with me  
 For yet another day, for, know, thy presence  
 Is life and goods to me."

" Now God forbid  
 That we should not be happy for a third day,"  
 Bahrám said, while the water-carrier blessed him :—  
 " Be merry in thy heart and mate with fortune."

He took to the bázár his water-skins  
 And tackle, which he pledged to some rich man,  
 Bought what he needed and returned in haste  
 Rejoicing to Bahrám, and said to him :—  
 " Help with the food, for man must eat."

Bahrám

Took the meat promptly from him, cut it up,  
 And then proceeded with the cookery.  
 When they had eaten they took wine and goblet,  
 And first of all drank to the king of kings.  
 Lambak, when they had drunk, prepared for sleep,  
 And set a candle by Bahrám Gúr's couch.  
 The fourth day, when the sun shone and Bahrám Gúr  
 Awoke, his host approached and said : " Famed sir !  
 Thou hast resided in this small, dark house,  
 And doubtless in discomfort ; still if thou  
 Fear'st not the Sháh stay in my mean abode  
 Two se'ights more if so thou hast a mind."

C. 1494

Then Sháh Bahrám blessed him and said : " Live  
 thou  
 Thy years and months in mirth and happiness.  
 We have been jolly in this house three days,  
 While quaffing to the monarchs of the world,  
 And elsewhere I will speak a word for thee  
 That shall make bright thy heart and plans, for why  
 Thy hospitality shall yield thee fruit,  
 And, if thou perseverest, thrones and crowns."

Dust-swift he put the saddle on his steed,  
 Departed merrily and sought the chase.  
 He hunted on till night the hills 'gan ride,  
 Then lightly from his meiny turned aside.

## § 4

*How Bahrám went to the House of Baráhám, the Jew,  
 who treated him scurvily*

He stole away and made toward the house  
 Of barren Baráhám, knocked at the door,  
 And said : "The Sháh hath come back from the  
 chase,  
 But I was left behind. 'Tis night and I  
 Know not the way, can find not Sháh and escort.  
 If I may sojourn in this house to-night  
 I will not trouble any one."

A slave

Went and reported this to Baráhám,  
 Who answered : "Trouble not thyself hereat,  
 But say : 'Thou wilt not get a lodging here.' "

The messenger departed to Bahrám Gúr,  
 And said : "There is no shelter here for thee."

Bahrám replied : "Return to him and say :  
 'I mean to stop. I ask thee for a lodging  
 To-night and I will trouble thee no further.' "

The servant, hearing this, ran back and said :—  
 "This horseman will not budge to-night and saith  
 As much in many words."

Said Baráhám :—

"Go instantly and say : 'This house is small.  
 The Jew is very poor and every night  
 Reposeth, bare and hungry, on the ground.' "

They gave the message, and Bahrám Gúr said :—

“ If here my lodging will prove troublesome  
 I will not enter but will sleep outside  
 The door, 'tis all I want.”

Said Baráhám :—

“ Brave horseman ! thoughtlessly <sup>1</sup> thou troublest me.  
 Were any one to rob thee in thy sleep  
 I should be plagued enough on thine account.  
 Come in if thou art in distress and want,  
 But on condition that thou askest naught.  
 I have not e'en a napkin wherewithal  
 To wipe my body when 'tis washed at death,  
 Or shroud wherein to wind it.”

C. 1495

“ My good sir ! ”

Bahrám rejoined, “ I will not trouble thee  
 In any way. Thy portal will suffice.  
 I will be watchman, barring bell and cry.”

Then Baráhám was troubled, and his soul  
 A brake of cares. He thought : “ This saucy fellow  
 Will not depart. How can I cause him trouble  
 About his steed ? ” then said again : “ Great sir !  
 Thy many words afflict me. If thy steed  
 Shall leave its droppings here and stale or break  
 The tiles, thou shalt remove its dung at dawn,  
 Sweep up, bear off its refuse to the plain,  
 And pay for any breakages at once.”

Bahrám replied : “ I pledge my head to this.”  
 Dismounting from his steed he tethered it  
 With its own bridle and unsheathed his sword.  
 He spread his saddle-cloth, used as his pillow  
 The saddle, and reposed upon the floor.  
 The Jew secured the door, brought victuals forth,  
 And sat him down to eat. “ O cavalier ! ”  
 He said, “ remember, having heard, this saw :—  
 ‘ Who hath may eat and who hath not look on.’ ”

He answered : “ I have heard so from of old,

<sup>1</sup> Or “ grievously.”

And now I have beheld made manifest  
What thou hast quoted from a sage's words."

The Jew brought wine forth and, when satiate  
With food and blither for the drinking, bawled :—  
“ O toilful horseman ! list this ancient saw :—  
‘ He that hath food and purposeth to eat  
Will offer his thanksgiving for the meat,  
For one of substance hath a happy mind,  
And in his wealth a coat of mail will find ;  
But Empty Pockets is a dry-lipped wight,  
And, like thee, ravenous at mid of night.’ ”

Bahrám replied : “ ‘Tis passing wonderful  
What I have seen, and must not be forgotten,  
And if thy goblet give thee good at last  
Then heigh for drinker, wine, and genial cup ! ”

When o'er the mountains Sol displayed its sword  
Bahrám Gúr shunned more sleep and put the saddle  
On his fleet grey. His saddle ! Nay, hard pillow.  
Came Baráhám and said : “ O cavalier !  
Thou art not faithful to thy word. Thou saidst :—  
‘ I will sweep up the droppings of the steed  
At once.’ Away with them as thou didst promise.  
I am annoyed by a dishonest guest.”

Bahrám Gúr answered : “ Go and fetch a slave.  
He will remove the droppings fast enough,<sup>1</sup>  
And I will give him gold for sweeping up,  
And bearing off, the refuse to the plain.”

“ No one have I,” he said, “ to sweep up refuse,  
Take it away, and fling it in the ditch.  
Break not thy promises deceitfully ;  
Let me not say that thou hast played the knave.”

Bahrám Gúr, hearing, took another course.  
He had a dainty handkerchief of silk  
Inside his boot, all musk and spicery ;  
He took it out and put therein the droppings,

C. 1496

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Then flung them all together in the ditch.  
 Away went Baráhám and snatched it up  
 While Sháh Bahrám stood dazed. "Oho!" said he,  
 "Thou scrupulous! If the great king shall hear  
 Of all thy nobleness he will secure thee  
 From want in this world, and will set thee high  
 Among the chiefs."

He went back to his palace,  
 And all night long was planning what to do.  
 Within his halls thought banished all repose,  
 He laughed himself but kept the matter close.

### § 5

*How Bahrám bestowed the Wealth of Baráhám upon Lambak*

Next morn he donned his crown and held an audience,  
 Then called to him Lambak, the water-carrier,  
 Who came before him with enfolded arms.  
 They brought withal and quickly Baráhám,  
 That curst, malicious Jew. When he arrived  
 They made him sit and called an honest man,  
 To whom the Sháh said: "Take some baggage-beasts  
 And, acting with the utmost honesty,  
 Go to the house of Baráhám forthwith,  
 And look thou bring what thou find'st hoarded there."

That honest man went to the Jew's abode.  
 The house was all brocade, dínárs, and raiment,  
 All carpetings, and draperies, and hoards.  
 There was a caravanserai attached,  
 And no room too on earth for all the goods—  
 Gold, silver, every gem, and, on the top  
 Of every bag, a lofty diadem.  
 The archmage's reckoning failed. He called for camels,

C. 1497

A thousand from the desert of Jahram,  
 And packed the baggage but much still remained.<sup>1</sup>  
 That good man drove apace the caravans,  
 And, when the bells resounded from the court-gate,  
 Went and informed the Sháh : “ As many gems  
 Are here as in thy treasury, yet are left  
 Two hundred ass-loads ! ”

Thought the Sháh, amazed :—  
 “ The Jew hath greatly toiled, but to what profit  
 Since food hath failed him ? ”

Then the Sháh, the world-lord,  
 Bestowed a hundred camel-loads of gold,  
 Of drachms, of carpets, and things great and small  
 Upon the water-carrier. Lambak  
 Departed with his treasures. Then the Sháh  
 Called Baráhám and said to him : “ O thou  
 Consorting in thy meanness with the dust !  
 Dost tell me that thy prophet was long-lived,  
 And yet bewail life’s superfluities ? <sup>2</sup>  
 A horseman came and quoted me this saw,  
 Out of the sayings of the past, which saith :—  
 ‘ Hath will enjoy and Hath not withereth.’  
 So now withdraw thy grasping hand and watch  
 Henceforth the enjoyment of the water-carrier.”

Then to that vile Jew of the synagogue  
 He spake at large of droppings, handkerchief  
 Gold-woven, and tiles, bestowed upon the knave  
 Four drachms, and said : “ Take this as capital ;  
 No more befitteth thee. To mendicants  
 Thy wealth, to thee thy head.”

He gave the poor  
 All that there was. The Jew departed wailing.  
 The Sháh gave up the house to plundering ;  
 ’Twas well that other folk should have their fling.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> If your prophet managed to live long on little so can you.

## § 6

*How Bahrám slew Lions and forbade Wine-drinking*

He found employment for the hunting cheetah,  
 Bestirred him and was minded for the chase.  
 He mounted him upon a speedy steed,  
 And pricked forth to the plain with hawk on hand.  
 He found a wood that was a rich man's seat.  
 It was as verdurous as Paradise,  
 And there was neither man nor beast in sight.  
 He said : "Here lions should be found. No man  
 Of prudence would sleep here."

He entered in,

And rode about surveying it. He saw  
 A lion there and that he must employ  
 The scimitar. He shouted at the beast  
 And, when it bravely charged him, rode outside  
 The forest, blazed forth like Ázargashasp,      C. 149<sup>t</sup>  
 And, when the lion followed, strung his bow,  
 A hero he, shot and transfixed the creature  
 Through side and heart ; that of the lioness  
 Grew all a-flame, and she too charged Bahrám,  
 Roared out and clawed at him. The cavalier  
 Smote with his sword her loins, and that brave beast  
 Gave up the fight. Now in the wood there dwelt  
 A country magnate, a God-fearing man,  
 Whose name was Mihr Bídád. That sword-stroke  
 charmed him.  
 With sweet words on his tongue that old man left  
 The wood, drew near the Sháh, blessed him, did  
 reverence,  
 And said : "O famous chief ! may fortune's star  
 Be at thy beck. A rural chief am I,  
 O holy one ! and owner of this march,

This tilth, and mansion, ox and ass and sheep.  
 Those lions caused me sorrow and despair ;  
 Now by thy hand, thy thumb-ring, and thy hilt  
 God hath removed them. Tarry in our wood,<sup>1</sup>  
 And I will bring thee milk and wine and honey.  
 I have as many lambs as thou canst want  
 With trees fruit-laden that will furnish shade.”

The Sháh alighted and surveyed the forest ;  
 He found it verdurous, supplied with streams,  
 And fitted for a young man’s dwelling-place.  
 Then Mihr Bídád went and fetched minstrelsy  
 As well as divers of the village-chiefs.  
 He slaughtered numbers of fat sheep and came,  
 Gold cup in hand. When they had eaten bread  
 The servants set on cups of wine with roses  
 And fenugreek. The host quaffed one and gave  
 Another to Bahrám and took all pains  
 To set him at his ease. When Mihr Bídád  
 Grew blithe with wine he said : “ Fair-fortuned hero !  
 Thou favourest the Sháh or the full moon  
 At midnight.”

Said Bahrám : “ Yea, that is so ;  
 The King of kings designed this face of mine.  
 He maketh as He willeth, waxing not  
 Nor waning, but if I am like the Sháh  
 Then I have given thee this seat and forest.”

This said, he mounted, sought his pleasure-palace,  
 Bemused, but sleepless in the garth all night  
 Romanced about the lips of the beloved.

C. 1499 Next morn he took his seat and called for wine.  
 The captains of the host approached rejoicing,  
 And with the others came a noble man  
 Who from his village brought a gift of fruit—  
 Pomegranate, apple, quince, in camel-loads,  
 And posies fashioned for imperial use.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

The world-lord, seeing him, saluted him,  
And seated him among the paladins.  
The lord that brought the posies and the fruit  
Bore in the olden tongue the name Kírwí.  
While he was joying to behold the Sháh,  
The nobles, and the banquet-hall, he spied  
A crystal goblet filled with wine which proved  
His ruin. Reaching out among the lords  
He grasped it, rose, and drank "The king of kings!"  
Then cried : "A toper I, my name Kírwí.  
Since in the presence of the king of kings  
I drain the goblet I will drain again."

This said, he drained the goblet seven times,  
And distanced all the other revellers.  
Then by the Sháh's permission he departed  
To learn if he could bear off all that wine.  
He left the jovial city for the plain,  
And when the wine was warm within his breast  
He galloped from among his retinue  
Toward the hills, dismounted, chose him out  
A quiet, shady spot, and slumbered. Came  
A black crow from the mountains and pecked out  
His eyes ! His escort following found him dead  
And eyeless with his roadster by his side,  
And wailed o'er him and at such revelry.

Now when Bahrám had wakened in his chamber  
A courtier came to him, and said : "A crow  
Hath pecked out both Kírwí's bright eyes while he  
Was lying drunk among the hills."

The world-lord

Grew pale of cheek thereat and sorrowful,  
And from the palace proclamation issued :—  
"Ye men of name endowed with Grace and sense !  
Wine is a thing forbidden in the world  
Alike to paladin and artisan."

Thus passed a year while all held wine forbidden

E'en when the Sháh himself held revelry,  
Or called for tales from old time legendry.

## § 7

*The Story of the young Shoemaker, and how Bahrám allowed Wine again*

C. 1500 Now at that time a young shoemaker wedded  
A virtuous wife, rich and of good repute,  
But failed in nuptial duty, and his mother  
Lamented bitterly his grievous case.  
Howbeit she had some wine in store. She took  
Her son to her own house and bade the youth :—  
“ Drink seven cups to hearten thee. Perchance  
Thou mayest break this stubborn seal to-night.  
How can a woollen mattock mine in stone ? ”

He quaffed cups seven or eight, and verily  
His feet and hide waxed strong. The cups had made  
The young man confident ; he came, achieved  
His purpose, and then went back to his mother  
In high delight thereat, and thus it chanced :  
A lion of the Sháh's had broken loose,  
And came along the road. Now at the time  
The shoemaker was still in drink—a sea  
That made his fingers thumbs. He ran, bestrode  
The roaring lion, and then reaching out  
He clutched its ears. The lion had been fed ;  
The youth maintained his seat. Post-haste the keeper  
Came running after them, a chain in one hand,  
A lasso in the other. He beheld  
A shoemaker upon the lion's back,  
Perched there like some bold rider on an ass,  
Ran to the palace-gate, came unabashed  
Before the Sháh, and told about the wonder

That he had seen, with his own eyes, and none  
 Beside had heard. The world-lord all amazed  
 Called the high priest and chiefs, and bade the former:—  
 “ See what the stock of this shoemaker is.  
 If he shall prove a paladin by birth  
 ‘Tis well, for courage fitteth paladins.”

They sought and asked his mother : “ Is his rank  
 Above his station ? ”

When the talk grew long  
 She hurried to the Sháh and told him all,  
 First doing her obeisance and exclaiming :—  
 “ Live happily till time shall be no more.  
 This youth, who had not come to man’s estate,  
 Must take himself a partner and keep house,  
 And then prove impotent ! His wife, she said :—  
 ‘ This weakling was self-sown ! ’ All privily  
 I gave to him three cups of wine, and none  
 In all the world was ware thereof. Forthwith  
 It flushed his cheeks and made a man of him.  
 Three cups of wine are his nobility ;  
 Who could imagine that the Sháh would wish  
 To hear thereof ? Shoemaker was his granddad,  
 And so is he, and not by birth above  
 His trade.”

The Sháh smiled on the crone, and said :—  
 “ This is no tale to hide.”

He thus addressed  
 The archmage : “ Wine is now permissible,  
 And we should drink thereof to his extent  
 Who in his cups still can bestride a lion,  
 And not be overthrown, but not to his  
 Who lieth all dead-drunk upon the road  
 What while some black crow pecketh out his eyes.”

A proclamation went up from the gate :—  
 “ O paladins who wear the golden girdle !  
 Drink wine in moderation, all of you !

C. 1501

Considering the end when ye begin,  
 And when the wine hath led you to delight  
 Then go to sleep but not in helpless plight.”

## § 8

*How Rúzbih, Bahrám’s High Priest, ruined a Village  
 by a Stratagem and restored it*

The third day at the dawn the Sháh went forth,  
 He and his men, to hunt upon the plain ;  
 Hormuz, his minister, was on his left,  
 And on his right the holy archimage.  
 They told him tales, discoursing of Jamshíd  
 And Farídún.<sup>1</sup> Before them were the hounds,  
 The cheetahs, hawks, and falcons. Thus they shortened  
 The tedious day. Bright Sol was high, but still  
 They saw no trace of deer or onager,  
 And so Bahrám Gúr, troubled by the heat,  
 Turned back in dudgeon from the hunting-field.  
 He came upon a verdurous spot fulfilled  
 With houses, men, and cattle. Many folk  
 Came from the settlement to see the troops,  
 But no man did obeisance ! Thou hadst said :—  
 “The earth hath tethered every ass of them !”  
 The monarch, vexed and overcome by heat,  
 Had fixed upon that village for a halt.  
 Its folk disgusted him, he viewed them not  
 With favour, and in anger thus addressed  
 The high priest : “What an ill-starred spot is this !  
 Be it a lair for wild beasts and for game,  
 And may its streams run pitch.”

The archimage,  
 Who took this for an order, turned aside

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. pp. 129 *seq.*, 147 *seq.*

Toward the village and informed the folk :—

C. 1502

“ This verdant spot—all fruitage, men, and cattle—  
 Hath greatly pleased Bahrám, the king of kings,  
 Who hath a new design respecting it.  
 He raiseth all of you to noble rank  
 To turn this pleasant village to a city.  
 Here, lord and hireling, ye shall be all equal.  
 Men, women, children, ye shall be all chiefs,  
 Each of you be the master of the village.”

Glad shouts rose from that prosperous settlement  
 Because the people were all lords alike.  
 Thenceforth, man’s rede or woman’s, ’twas all one,  
 And slave and hireling were their master’s peers.  
 The village-youths, no longer checked by awe,  
 Cut off their elders’ heads, then fell upon  
 Each other and, where roads were not, shed blood.  
 At that to-do folk fled incontinent.  
 The helpless aged remained, but there remained not  
 The implements of culture, goods, and crops.  
 The settlement had ruin in its face,  
 The trees were withered and the streams ran dry,  
 The land and houses were all desolate,  
 And shunned of man and beast. Now when a year  
 Had passed and spring returned the monarch went  
 A-hunting in those parts and reached that spot  
 Erst populous and blithe, and saw the place  
 O’erturned, trees withered, habitations waste,  
 And not a man or beast throughout the march.  
 Thereat the Sháh turned pale, the fear of God  
 Came on him, he was grievously distressed,  
 And thus addressed the archmage : “ O Rúzbih !  
 Alack ! this place so jocund once is ruined !  
 Go to now and restore it with my treasures,  
 And take such order that the folk henceforth  
 Be scathless.”

Going from the royal presence

The archmage sped forth to that scene of ruin.  
 From street to street he hurried and at last  
 Came on an old man unemployed. Dismounting  
 He spake the elder fair, made him sit down  
 Near by, and said to him : " Old, honoured sir !  
 Who wrecked this district once so populous ? "

The old man answered thus : " Our monarch once  
 Was passing through our parts, and thereupon  
 There came to us a witless archimage,  
 One of those useless people with big names,  
 And said to us : ' Ye all are chieftains here :  
 See that ye pay respect to nobody.  
 Be masters, all of you, both men and women,  
 And great among the great.' Such were his words,  
 C. 1503 And all the township was convulsed thereat,  
 All rapine, murder, stick ! May God befriend him  
 In like proportion, may grief, death, and hardship  
 Ne'er stale with him. Our case is growing worse,  
 And such that folk must weep for us."

Rúzbih,  
 Grieved for that old man, asked : " Who is your  
 chief ? "

The other answered : " Who will have a place  
 Where there is naught excepting seed and grass ? "

Rúzbih replied : " Be thou the governor,  
 Be as the crown upon the head in all things,  
 Make requisition from the world-lord's treasures  
 For money, oxen, asses, grain, and produce ;  
 Bring to the village all the unemployed ;  
 They all are subjects, thou alone art chief,  
 And curse no more the ancient archimage,  
 Who spake not as he would in what he said.  
 If thou wilt have assistants from the court  
 I will dispatch them. Ask for what thou wilt."

The elder joyed to hear this and was freed  
 From longsome grief. He hied him home forthwith,

Brought others to his Cistern and began  
To people and apportion out the lands.

They borrowed from their neighbours ox and ass,  
And furnished all the plain. He and his settlers  
Worked hard and planted many trees on all sides,  
And, when his labour had restored one piece,  
The hearts of those that dwelt therein rejoiced.  
Those that had fled, their heart's blood in their eyes,  
Flocked back on hearing of that restoration,  
And of the toils of that white-headed chief,  
And reinstated street and water-course,  
While fowl, ox, ass, and sheep all multiplied  
Upon the cultured parts, and everywhere  
Folk planted trees till that waste spot became  
Like Paradise. The third year he restored  
The town : the chief was blessed in all his labours.

When jocund spring came round the Sháh went forth  
Upon the plain a-hunting with Rúzbih,  
The high priest. When the pair drew near the hamlet  
Bahrám Gúr suddenly beheld the world  
All crops and cattle, lofty mansions rose,  
And all the township thronged with sheep and oxen.  
'Twas all streams, pleasantries, and growing crops,  
And fenugreek and tulips filled the hills,  
Whereon roamed sheep and lambs, for hill and dale  
Had grown to be a paradise. The Sháh  
Said to the high priest : " O Rúzbih ! what didst thou c. 1504  
To make this verdant village waste and scatter  
Its men and beasts, and what hast thou dispensed  
In thus restoring it ? "

The high priest answered :—

" This ancient seat was ruined by a word,  
And by a word restored, to please the Sháh.  
He bade me : ' Take thou treasure and dínárs,  
And make this verdant spot a wilderness,'  
But I feared God and blame from great and small.

When friends, though one in heart, are two in aim  
 'Tis ruin, as I have perceived, to both ;  
 So when there are two rulers in a state  
 Their land will be o'erturned. I went and said  
 Thus to the elders of this settlement :—  
 ' O men ! there is no ruler over you  
 From this time forth, but women, children, slaves,  
 Hirelings and husbandmen, are lords alike.'  
 When those who had been underlings became  
 Lords too the nobles' heads were all brought low,  
 And all the place was ruined by a word.  
 Thus was I far removed from all reproach,  
 And apprehension of God's chastisement.  
 Thereafter, when the Sháh had ruth on them,  
 I went and pointed out another course ;  
 I made a wise, old man and eloquent,  
 A man of leading and informed, the ruler.  
 He laboured and restored the waste, rejoicing  
 His subjects' hearts. When one man ruled, the counse  
 Was good, prosperity increased, ill waned.  
 I, unobserved, had shown them what was bad,  
 And opened afterward the way of God.  
 Discourse is better than fine-watered gems  
 When 'tis employed aright. Let wisdom be  
 The Sháh, the tongue the paladin, if thou  
 Wouldst have thy spirit easy. May thy heart  
 Be glad for aye and free from wile and waste."

The Sháh, on hearing, cried : " Well done, Rúzbih  
 Thou'rt worthy of a crown ! "

Bahrám Gúr gave

That old man worshipful and prescient  
 A purse all filled with gold dínárs.. For him  
 A robe of honour too they fashionéd  
 Of royal stuffs, and cloud-ward raised his head.

## § 9

*How Bahrám married a Country-miller's Daughters*

Another week the monarch of the world  
 Went forth to hunt with lords and archimates,  
 Prepared to spend a month upon the chase,  
 To revel with his meiny, and to take  
 Illimitable game on waste and mountain.

C. 1505

He and his escort reached in merry pin  
 A town. The night came on, and all was dark.  
 The chiefs dismissed the escort and recited  
 Tales of the Sháhs. He saw afar a fire,  
 Such as Sháhs kindle on Bahman's high day.<sup>1</sup>  
 The king of kings gazed at the light and spied  
 A pleasant village with a mill before it,  
 Where sat the village-chiefs, while all the maidens,  
 Each with a crown of roses on her head,  
 Were feasting by themselves beside the fire.  
 The minstrels sat about, the maidens sang  
 Tales of the royal wars, and every one  
 Began to tell a story in her turn.  
 They all were moon-faced, all had locks a-curl,  
 All were sweet-spoken, and all savoured musk.  
 They sat ranked on the grass and close before  
 The mill-door, singing, with a posy each,  
 And half bemused with wine and merriment.  
 Then from that scene of revel rose a cry,  
 And one exclaimed : "The toast of Sháh Bahrám !  
 He hath Grace, stature, mien, and love. Before him  
 The rolling sphere upstandeth. Thou wouldest say :—  
 'His face distilleth wine, the scent of musk  
 Proceedeth from his hair.' He only hunteth  
 The lion and the onager, and so  
 Folk title him 'Bahrám Gúr.' "

This he heard,

<sup>1</sup> The day Bahman of the month Bahman was a time of festivity.

And rode toward them. Drawing near the girls  
 He scanned the plain, beheld it filled with Moons,  
 And saw that he should stop short of the city.  
 He bade, and from the road cup-bearers came,  
 Provided wine and boon-companions,  
 And handed him a crystal cup. Meanwhile  
 Four of the girls, those chief in rank, came forth—  
 One *Mushkináb*,<sup>1</sup> the others *Mushkinak*,  
*Náztáb*, and *Súsanak*. With cheeks like spring,  
 With stately mien, and hand in hand, they went  
 Before the Sháh and sang about *Bahrám*,  
 The king of kings, the wise and prosperous.  
*Bahrám Gúr* asked, for they perturbed his heart :—  
 “ Who are ye,<sup>2</sup> rose-cheeked ? Wherefore is this fire ? ”

O. 1506

One said : “ O cavalier of cypress-height,  
 So like a king in everything ! our father  
 Is an old miller who is shooting game  
 Upon this mountain and will come anon  
 Since it is night, and he can see no longer.”

With that the miller and his men came bringing  
 Their quarry. When his eyes fell on *Bahrám Gúr*  
 He rubbed his face upon the dust and bare him  
 With awe and reverence. The Sháh bade give  
 That old man just arrived a golden cup,  
 And said to him : “ Why keepest thou these four  
 With sunny faces thus ? Is it not time  
 For them to wed ? ”

The old man offered praise,  
 And said : “ There is no husband for them ; they  
 Are maidens still and pure in chastity,  
 But that is all the property they have,  
 And this is all that I can say for them.”

<sup>1</sup> *Mushkináz* in C. and P. *Mushkináb* means “ Pure Musk ” ; *Mushkinak* is a species of bird ; *Náztáb* is “ Charmer,” and *Súsanak* “ Little Lily.”

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

Bahrám said : " Give me all the four, and henceforth  
Regard them not as daughters."

Quoth the ancient :—

" Do not as thou hast said, O cavalier !  
No cups have we, no land, no crops, no silver,  
No mansion, ox, and ass."

Bahrám Gúr said :—

" 'Tis well, for I would have them portionless."

The miller said : " The four shall be thy wives,  
The handmaids of the dust within thy chambers.  
Thine eye hath seen their good points and their ill,  
And, seeing, hath approved."

Bahrám Gúr said :—

" From holy God, the All-giver, I accept them."

He spake and rose. Steeds neighed upon the plain.  
He bade the eunuchs of his escort bear  
Those Idols to the royal women's house,  
And through the night the troops filed o'er the waste.

The miller marvelled, mused all night, and said  
Thus to his wife : " This moon-like lord so tall  
And masterful, how came he here by night ? "

She answered : " He perceived the fire from far,  
The noise the girls were making, and the sound  
Of minstrels, harp, and revelry."

The miller  
Said to his wife : " Advise me, O my spouse !  
If this affair will turn out well or ill ? "

She answered : " It is all God's providence.  
The man, on seeing them, asked not their race,  
Thought not of dowry. On earth's face he sought  
For Moons and not for money or kings' daughters.  
If idol-worshippers saw these in Chín  
There would be no more idol-worshipping ! "

Thus till above the Raven's back the sun  
Rose, and the world grew like a shining lamp,  
They talked at large of base and upright men,

C. 1507

But with the day the village-chief arrived,  
 And said to that old man : " O brave of luck ! <sup>1</sup>  
 Good fortune visited thy couch last night !  
 The verdant branches of thy tree bear fruit.  
 One looked, beheld the merriment and fire,  
 And, having turned his horse about, drew near ;  
 So now thy daughters have become his wives,  
 And rest securely in his women's house.  
 By giving them such faces, hair, and carriage  
 Thou didst prepare them for the Sháh ! Bahrám,  
 The king of kings, is now thy son-in-law !  
 Henceforth thou wilt be famous through the realm.  
 He hath bestowed upon thee all this province  
 And march, so sorrow not, for thou hast 'scaped  
 From cares and fears. Command. 'Tis thine to bid.  
 We all of us are thralls and bound to thee ;  
 We all of us are subject to thee now,  
 Are subject ! Rather we are all thy slaves."

The miller and his wife in their amaze  
 Invoked God's name. The village-chieftain said :—  
 " Such locks as those and countenances too  
 Would bring the sun from his fourth heaven to woo."

#### § 10

##### *How Bahrám found the Treasures of Jamshid and bestowed them upon the Poor*

Another week he went forth to the chase  
 With favourites from the host and archimages.  
 Swift as the wind there came a loyal liege  
 With spade in hand and asking of the troops  
 Where was Bahrám, the Sháh, amid the throng ?  
 An archimage replied : " What wilt thou ? Speak.

<sup>1</sup> " O vaillant Rouzbeh." Mohl.

Thou canst not see the monarch of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

The man said : “ Since I may see not his face  
I will speak not before his followers.”

They brought before the Sháh that seeker—one  
Both learned and eloquent—who seeing him  
Said : “ I have words to speak to thee in private.”

Bahrám Gúr turned his horse’s head aside,  
And rode some distance from his followers’ sight.  
Then said the man : “ O world-possessing Sháh !  
Thou must observe my words. A countryman  
Am I, and landlord here. I own the soil,  
The homestead, and the crops. I was engaged  
In making water-courses on my land  
To benefit my property, and when  
There was much water, and the stream ran strong,  
In one place there was formed an orifice,  
A wondrous clamour reached mine ears, and I  
Came crying out in terror of my life.  
The clash of cymbals issued from the stream—  
A sound denoting treasure.”<sup>2</sup>

C. 1508

Hearing this  
Bahrám Gúr went and saw a plain all verdure,  
And watered, bade bring labourers with spades  
From far, and lighted from his steed. They pitched  
His tent among the crops. Night came. The warriors  
Lit lamps and everywhere enkindled fires.

Now when the sun set up above the deep  
Its banner, burnishing the violet air,  
The workmen mustered from all sides, as though  
A mighty army, and began to dig.  
That portion of the plain was excavate,  
And, as the workers wearied, there appeared  
Out of the dust a mount-like place—a mansion  
Of mortar and burnt brick—like Paradise.  
They plied their picks ; far down a doorway showed.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 250.

An archmage, seeing, entered by the door,  
He and another uninvited guest.

They found a single chamber long and wide,  
And many cubits high. Within it stood  
Two buffaloes of gold and, fronting them,  
A golden laver strewn with emeralds  
And rubies mixed. They seemed two Signs of Taurus,  
Were hollow, and were filled up with pomegranates,  
With apples, and with quinces that contained  
Fine-watered pearls, each like a water-drop.  
The buffaloes had jewel-eyes, and heads  
Decayed with age. Ranked round them there were  
lions

And onagers, some having ruby eyes,  
And others crystal. There were golden pheasants  
And peacocks, with their breasts and eyes all gems.  
The minister, whose wisdom was a crown  
Upon the moon, on seeing that spectacle,  
Went to the Sháh and cried excitedly :—  
“ Arise. Enough to dower thy treasures  
Is here ! A chamber filled with precious stones  
Is manifest, whose key high heaven hath kept ! ”

His lord said : “ One of counsel and of might  
Would write his name upon his treasures. See  
Whose name is there and when they were amassed.”

On hearing this the high priest went and saw  
The impress of the signet of Jamshíd  
Upon the buffaloes, and notified  
The monarch of the world : “ I have beheld,  
And ‘ Sháh Jamshíd ’ is on the buffaloes.”

The Sháh said : “ O high priest in all regards  
More learned than sages ! wherefore make mine own  
The treasures that Jamshíd laid up of yore ?  
May nothing e'er be added to my wealth  
Unless by justice and the scimitar.  
Bestow the whole upon the poor. God grant

That no mishap befall us. For my troops  
 No share is requisite, our valour openeth  
 The earth to us. As is the use of kings  
 'Tis needful that we count up all this wealth,  
 Sell all the gems for cash, and then assemble  
 From desert and from settlement the widows,  
 The orphans, and the impoverished men of name—  
 Those lost to aspiration, fame, and ease—  
 Then take the sum of such, including those  
 That, troubled by their debts, should have a share,  
 And give to them the money and the goods  
 To assoil Jamshíd the world-lord's soul, but I  
 Am youthful still, and sound in wind and limb ;  
 Why should I seek his treasures ? Let one tenth  
 Be for the finder, who sought out the Sháh,  
 But never let him hope for joy hereafter  
 That beareth off the cerecloth from Jamshíd.  
 To compass toil in consort with my troops,  
 And treasure and renown from Rúm and Chín,  
 That is for me and for my steed, Shabdíz,  
 And for my trenchant scimitar. No shifts,  
 Or shirks, for me ! ”

He went back to the treasure

Won by his sweat and toil, assembled all  
 The warriors of the realm, and gave his troops  
 A whole year's pay. He held a feast that spring,  
 Adorned his hall of jewelled tracery,  
 And, when the red wine shone in crystal cups,  
 And he himself was jocund and right glad,  
 He thus harangued his friends : “ Exalted ones,  
 Who know the token of the throne of kings !  
 Down from Húshang as far as famed Naudar,  
 Who was a memory of Farídún,  
 And on again right up to Kai Kubád,  
 Who placed the crown of greatness on his head,  
 See who of all these mighty men is left,

And who remaineth to applaud their justice ?  
 Now, since the circle of their years is cut,  
 Their reputation is their monument,  
 Which saith that this had spirit, that had not,  
 And one doth blame them, and another praise.  
 We all shall pass in turn, and not to walk

C. 1510 The world for ill is well. Why should I need  
 The treasure of those gone ? Why should my heart  
 Expand toward dínárs ? I will not set it  
 Upon this Wayside Inn, or make my boast  
 Of crown, or clutch at treasure. If the days  
 Pass in delight why should the wise eat grief ?  
 Whene'er a liege of mine, a countryman  
 Or courtier, shall complain of mine oppression  
 Then may my head and crown and treasure perish."

There was an ancient man, hight Máhiyár,  
 Whose years had reached eight score and four. He  
 rose,

On hearing this, and spake thus : " O just lord !  
 Tales have we heard of Farídún, Jamshíd,  
 And others more or less renowned, but none  
 Hath heard of Sháh like thee—the lowly's hope,  
 The Glory of the great—and were the sea  
 Large as thy heart 'twould rise in waves of gems,  
 For from thy soul the radiance of Surúsh  
 Proceedeth, dwarfing all a wise man's wit.  
 Thou hast so lavished treasure in the world  
 That no one great or small hath seen the like.  
 When men spake of the era of Jamshíd,  
 And of the treasure of the buffaloes,  
 None wotted where it was—beneath the dust,  
 Or in the dragon's breath—but having found it  
 Thou didst not look thereon, for thou didst scorn  
 This Wayside Hostelry. Good sooth ! no king  
 Hath seen, nor will a hundred see, such jewels  
 As these in any sea, yet these and all

The buffaloes and onagers thou gavest  
Without exception to the poor ! May crown  
And girdle never lack thee. Health be thine,  
Be victor thou and fortune's favourite.  
The ink would blacken many a royal roll  
To tell this tale and yet not reach the end.  
Thou being gone thy name will live in praise  
When folk recount the story of thy days."

## § II

*How Bahrám, returning from Hunting, went to the House  
of a Merchant and departed displeased*

One day, another week, he went to hunt,  
When indisposed, and took his bow and arrows.  
The plain grew sultry with the blazing sun.  
He came back from his hunting leisurely,  
And reached a merchant's house, to whom he said,  
On looking round and seeing none beside :  
"Canst give us lodging since thou wilt not find us  
A trouble ? "

C. 1511

Having helped him to dismount  
The merchant found a place for him. The Sháh,  
Complaining of the colic, gave the merchant  
Some drachms, and said : "Toast some old cheese  
with almonds."

The merchant did not do as he was asked,  
Not having almonds by him, but, at night-fall  
And at his leisure, got a hot roast fowl,  
And served it to Bahrám upon a tray,  
Who said : "I asked thee for old cheese, besought thee  
To bring it, and thou hast not brought it me  
Although I gave thee drachms and had complained  
Of colic."

Said the merchant : " Foolish fellow !

Thy soul is starving through thy lack of wit.  
Since I have brought to thee this hot roast fowl  
Mere shame should stay thee asking aught beside."

Bahrám thereat ceased longing for old cheese.  
Grieved at his words he ate, referring not  
To what had passed. When it was sleeping-time  
He slept and said naught further to the merchant.

Now when the sun rose o'er the heaving deep,  
And when the Cloak pitch-hued had disappeared,  
The wealthy merchant said to his apprentice :—  
“ O simpleton ! why didst thou buy a fowl  
Not worth a drachm for more and wrong me so ?  
Had't been a proper fowl then he and I  
Had fallen not out last night, or hadst thou spent  
A quarter of a drachm in buying cheese  
He would have been to me like milk and water  
To-day.”

The apprentice answered : “ 'Tis all one.  
Know that the fowl is at my charge. Be thou  
And he my guests, so quarrel not with me  
About the bird.”

Now when Bahrám arose  
From pleasant sleep he sought his docile steed  
To saddle it and go back to his palace,  
And from his palace raise his crown to Saturn.  
The apprentice, seeing him, said to Bahrám :—  
“ Give to thy slave thy company to-day.”

The Sháh returned, sat down again, and mar-  
velled  
At fortune. Then the youth went out and fetched  
Two hundred almonds and addressed his master :—  
“ Bestir thee, sir ! and have these almonds toasted,  
Make ready too some cheese and some new bread,  
For such the cavalier asked yesterday,  
Bring food and spread the board.”

He went before

Bahrám and said : " O cavalier ! I bring thee  
All hot what yesterday thou didst require,  
And there is more to follow in due course."

C. 1512

Thus saying he set off to the bázár,  
A different sort of purchaser. He bought  
More almonds, sugar, fowl, and lamb to make  
An ample meal, wine, saffron, musk, rose-water,  
And hurried home. He brought the board all spread  
With dainty meats. A sprightly youth was he  
And well disposed. The eating done, he brought  
Forth cups of wine, first serving king Bahrám,  
And thus, till blithe and jocund, they proceeded  
From eating to the cup. The Sháh addressed  
His entertainer thus : " Bahrám will be  
Inquiring for me, but do ye drink on,  
Grow drunk, and budge not till ye prove yourselves  
Wine-worshippers."

Then rubbing down and saddling  
Shabdíz he started, blithe with wine, for court,  
First saying to the merchant : " Toil not so  
In quest of gain, O thou that sellest dear !  
Thou wouldst have sold me for a quarter drachm  
Yestreen, sewn up the eyes of thine apprentice  
Because he bought a fowl above the price,  
And have put me within the dragon's maw."

He spake and sped back to his royal seat.  
Now when the sun displayed its crown in heaven  
The guardian of the world sat on his throne  
Of ivory and bade the chamberlain  
Seek out the merchant and conduct him thither  
With his apprentice. One of them was glad,  
The other glum. Bahrám, on seeing the apprentice,  
Made much of him and seated him rejoicing  
Among the lords. They brought to him a purse,  
And made his awe-gloomed spirit like the moon.  
Then to the merchant said Bahrám : " Know this :

Thou shalt be slave for life to thine apprentice,  
 And, further, pay him twice in every month  
 Three score drachms from thy savings. With thy  
     goods  
 He shall be entertainer and make laugh  
 The hearts of noble men.”

Then to the high priest :—

“ The king that disregardeth this world’s doings,  
 How can he know what man is truly great,  
 Or how discern the evil from the good ? ”<sup>1</sup>

So now, O sage that seekest wisdom’s way !  
 If thou must have a saw hear what I say :—  
 “ Avoid all avarice if man thou be,  
 Or be indeed below humanity.”

### § 12

#### *How Bahrám slew a Dragon and went to a Yokel’s House*

C. 1513

Bahrám abode a season with his lords,  
 With sparkling wine, with cup, and minstrelsy.  
 Spring came, the ground seemed Paradise, the air  
 Sowed tulips on earth’s face, all tracts grew full  
 Of game, and in the brooks the waters seemed  
 Like wine and milk. The deer and onager  
 Paced in the dales or clustered on the sward,  
 The blackbirds haunted all the river-banks,  
 And all around them bent pomegranate-blooms.  
 “ ‘Tis long,” the nobles said to Sháh Bahrám Gúr,  
 “ Since we have hunted onager.”

He answered :—

“ Choose we a thousand horsemen from the host,  
 And let them bring the cheetahs and the hawks,

<sup>1</sup> In C the next section begins here. We follow the arrangement in P.

The falcons and the noble peregrines,  
Go to Túrán and pass a month in hunting.”

The royal hunter went. He found the world  
All hues and scent. His gallant chieftains swept it  
For onager, gazelle, and mountain-sheep—  
A labour that extended o'er two days—  
What while Bahrám had wine in hand ; the third,  
When Sol illumined its crown, when earth grew golden,  
And hill and stream became as ivory,  
The valiant Sháh went to the chase and saw  
A dragon like a lion. From its head  
Hair hung down to the ground, and it had breasts  
Like those of women. Then Bahrám Gúr strung  
His bow and shot forthwith a poplar arrow  
Against the dragon's chest. He shot another  
Straight at its head, and gore and venom flowed  
Adown its front. The king dismounted, drew  
His sword, and carved up all the dragon's breast.  
It had gulped down a youth and frozen him  
In blood and bane. Bahrám bewailed him sorely  
What while the venom blinded his own eyes.  
He took the corpse out of the dragon's maw,  
Ne'er may its head and breast unite again.  
He rode off dizzied, suffering, and longing  
For sleep and water, reached a settlement,  
Arriving at a house-door from the waste,  
And saw a woman shouldering a pitcher.  
She veiled her face from him. He said to her :—  
“ Can I lodge here or must I toil on still ? ”

She said : “ Brave horseman ! treat this house as  
thine.”  
On hearing this he rode his courser in.  
His hostess called her husband. “ Bring a wisp,”  
She said, “ and rub his steed. At feeding-time  
Feed from the sack.”

She went to her own chamber, C. 1514

Swept out the house and laid down mat and pillow,  
 With blessings on Bahrám, went to the cistern,  
 Drew water, and berated to herself  
 Her spouse the while : “ The fool will ne’er bestir  
 Himself on seeing some one in the house.  
 This is not women’s work, but for my part  
 I, soldier-like, can only grin and bear it ! ”

She brought and spread the board with vinegar  
 And salad, bread and curds. Went Sháh Bahrám,  
 And bathed his face, for he had been o’erwrought  
 In fighting with that dragon. So he ate  
 A little, then lay down and groaned, his face  
 Concealed beneath a kerchief made in Chín.

The woman, when she woke, said to her spouse :—  
 “ O knave with unwashed face ! thou shouldest slay  
 A lamb because this cavalier is great,  
 And of the royal seed, hath kingly bearing,  
 And moon-like Grace, and he is like to none  
 Save Sháh Bahrám.”

Her mean spouse said to her :—  
 “ Why such to-do ? Thou hast no salted meat,  
 No fire-wood, and no bread, and spinnest not  
 A-nights as others do. When thou hast killed  
 A lamb, and he—this cavalier—hath eaten  
 And gone, then go, buy, mingle with the throng ;  
 The winter, cold, and blast undoubtedly  
 Will come on thee no less.”

So spake her spouse.  
 She hearkened not, for she was good and wise,  
 And in the end her husband slew a lamb  
 At her entreaty for the cavalier.  
 When it was slain she made a pot of broth,  
 And lit a fire with half-burnt sticks, then brought  
 The tray with eggs thereon and water-cresses,  
 A roasted leg of lamb and everything  
 That she had cooked. Bahrám, when he had washed

His hands, his dinner done, felt indisposed  
 For slumber and still ailed. Now when the night  
 Foregathered with the sun the woman fetched  
 Wine and a harp. "O woman of few words!"  
 The Sháh said, "tell to me some old-world tale  
 That while thou art reciting I may quaff  
 To chase away my pain and cares. I give thee  
 Free speech about the Sháh for praise or blame."

That woman of few words said: "Yea, 'tis well,  
 For he is first and last in everything."

Bahrám responded: "He is so indeed,  
 But he is just and good to nobody."

That dame of spirit said: "O honest man!  
 This place hath many folk and many homes,  
 And always cavaliers are passing through  
 From public offices and ministers.

If one of them shall call a man a thief  
 The accused will have much trouble afterward.  
 The cavalier to compass some few drachms  
 Will make the poor man's life a misery,  
 Or one may smirch some honest woman's fame,  
 And make her fall to folly. This is loss,  
 Because the treasury is none the richer.

This is our trouble with our Sháh, the world-lord."

The king grew full of thought at that account—  
 How those in power were wronging his good name—  
 And then the pious Sháh thought with himself:—  
 "No one doth praise the just. Henceforward I  
 Will play the tyrant for a while that love  
 And justice may grow manifest from ill."

Vexed by dark thoughts he passed a sleepless night,  
 His heart allied to tyranny the while.  
 Now when Sol rent its musky-scented veil,  
 And showed its face in heaven, the woman left  
 The house and bade her spouse: "Bring pot and fire,  
 And in the water put all kinds of grain

C. 1515

Before the sun shall see it. Mind it well  
While I go milk the cow.”

She brought the cow  
From pasture, got much grass, and threw it down  
Before her ; then she tried the udders, crying :—  
“ In God’s name who hath neither mate nor peer ! ”

She found the udder milkless, and the heart  
Of that young hostess aged. She told her husband :—  
“ Good man ! our monarch’s heart hath changed in  
purpose,  
The world’s king hath become tyrannical !  
A secret change came o’er his heart last night.”

He said : “ What words are these ? Why go and  
croak ? ”

She thus replied : “ My dear one ! what I say  
Is sober truth, for when the Sháh, the world-lord,  
Hath grown unjust the moon may shine not forth  
In heaven, the udders are dry, the musk-bags lose  
Their scent, adultery and guile are rampant,  
The tender heart becometh flinty, wolves  
Devour folk on the waste, the sage doth flee  
The fool, and eggs are addled ’neath the hens  
What time the Sháh becometh tyrannous.  
The pasture of this cow had minished not,  
Her watering-place supplied her as before,  
Yet is her udder dry, her lowing changed.”

On hearing this the Sháh forthwith repented,  
And prayed to God : “ O Thou who art supreme,  
Almighty, and the Arbiter of fortune !  
If e’er my heart shall turn away from justice  
Then be the throne of kings no longer mine.”

That blessed dame, who worshipped holy God,  
Tried with her hand the udder once again,  
She tried it in the Lord’s name, saying thus :—  
“ Cause Thou the milk to flow.”

The milk flowed forth.

The good wife cried : “ O God, our Succourer !  
 Thou hast recalled to justice the unjust,  
 For, if not so, this virtue were not his.”

Then said she to the master of the house :—  
 “ The justice of the unjust is restored.  
 Laugh and rejoice ; this is the Maker’s boon  
 To us.”

Now when the porridge had been cooked,  
 And man and wife had done that chare, the good dame,  
 And after her the master of the house,  
 Who bare the tray, went to their guest. Upon it  
 There was a bowl of porridge, oh ! how good  
 Had it been but some broth ! The Sháh ate somewhat,  
 Then spake thus to that kindly dame : “ Take thou  
 This whip outside and hang it where folk pass.  
 Choose out a proper bough because the wind  
 Must harm it not, then note the passers by  
 With one eye on the whip.”

The good-man went  
 Forthwith, he hung the whip upon a tree,  
 And kept his eye thereon a while. There came  
 Innumerable troops along the road,  
 And all that saw the whip there hailed Bahrám.  
 They lighted down before that lengthy whip,  
 And passed saluting. “ ‘Tis the Sháh, none else !”  
 The good-man told his spouse. “ Naught but the  
 throne  
 Could fit a face like that ! ”

Then full of awe  
 Both ran to him and cried : “ O Sháh ! O great !  
 O mighty one ! O sage, high priest and world-lord !  
 A humble woman and her gardener-spouse  
 Have been thy poor hosts in this house. Withal  
 They did not do their best. We ne’er suspected  
 That ’twas the Sháh, that such an one as he  
 Would come to this place as a guest, would come

To this poor home of ours."

Bahrám replied :—

" Good friend ! I give to thee this march, the land,  
And village. Be thou ever hospitable ;  
Be that, and give up garden-work."

He spake,

C. 1517

And laughing left the house, gat on his steed  
Wind-footed, and from that poor village reached  
His jewelled halls. The nobles of Frán  
Went thither for the chase, three hundred strong,  
And each with thirty servants in his train  
Of Turkman, Rúman, or of Persian strain.

### § 13

*How Bahrám went to the Chase and espoused the  
Daughters of the Thane Barzin*

The third day after this the Sháh went forth  
With escort, the equipment for the chase,  
Ten camels all in housings of brocade  
With stirrups silver and with dossers gold,  
Ten camels with the Sháh's pavilion,  
And his brocaded seat. In front of these  
Were seven elephants which bare the throne  
Of turquoise hued like Nile ; its feet were all  
Of gold and crystal ; 'twas the throne itself  
Of Sháh Bahrám Gúr. Every swordsman there  
Had thirty pages who had golden belts  
And bridles, while a hundred camels served  
To bear the minstrels wearing massive crowns.  
The falconers had eight score hawks with them,  
And ten score noble peregrines and falcons.  
Among them there was one bird black of hue,

More precious in the Sháh's eyes than the rest,  
 With sable talons and with yellow beak,  
 Like gold a-gleam on lapis-lazuli.  
 They called it a tughral. Its eyes were like  
 Two goblets full of blood. The Khán of Chín  
 Had sent it with a throne and crown, with amber,  
 A golden torque inlaid with emeralds,  
 With two score armlets, and with thrice twelve earrings,  
 Three hundred camel-loads of rarities  
 Of Chín, and fifteen score of ruby signets.  
 Behind the falconers they led eight score  
 Of cheetahs for that Lustre of the world—  
 The Sháh—with jewelled torques and chains of gold.  
 Thus came the king of kings upon the plain,  
 And raised his crown o'er Jupiter. The sportsmen  
 Made for the river whither used the Sháh  
 Auspiciously to fare each seventh year.  
 As they drew near they found the river full  
 Of water-fowl. He had the tabor beaten,  
 And the tughral flew off. The imperious bird  
 Was all impatience ; in its claws a crane  
 Was helpless quarry, and a pard had been  
 Its proper prey. At length it soared from sight,      C. 1518  
 And bound a crane, then soared again and flew  
 Like shaft from bow, the falconer pursuing.  
 The Sháh was vexed that it had flown away,  
 And followed by the tinkling of its bells.  
 He came upon a spacious pleasure-ground,  
 With mansion rising in a coign thereof,  
 And thither went with certain of his men,  
 The rest remaining on the hunting-field.  
 On entering Bahram Gür saw a garden  
 As 'twere a mountain-skirt. Upon the ground  
 Brocade was spread, and all the place was full  
 Of slaves and wealth. A pool was in the centre  
 Whereby an old man sat. Three girls like ivory

Sat by him wearing turquoise crowns. Their cheeks  
Were like the spring, their statures tall, their eye-  
brows

Arched, and their tresses lassos ; each girl held  
A crystal goblet, and Bahrám Gúr saw them.  
His eyes were dazzled at the spectacle  
Just as his heart was gloomed for his tughral.  
On seeing him that wealthy thane grew pale  
As fenugreek with fear. A wise old man  
Was he, Barzín by name, but ill-affected  
Toward the Sháh. As swift as wind he left  
The hauz,<sup>1</sup> approached the Sháh, and kissed the  
ground,

Then said : “ O monarch of the sun-like face !  
May heaven revolve according to thy will.  
I do not dare to say to thee : ‘ Abide  
With thy two hundred horsemen on my march.’  
Still, if the Sháh take pleasure in my garden,  
The glory of Barzín hath reached the moon.”

“ To-day,” the world’s king answered, “ the tughral  
Escaped us. I am vexed about that fowler,  
Which hunted birds as leopards hunt their quarry.”

Barzín replied : “ I saw a sable bird  
Just now with golden bells and pitch-hued body,  
Its beak and talons turmeric in hue ;  
It came and settled on yon walnut-tree :  
By thy good fortune it is come to hand.”

The Sháh said to a servant : “ Go and look.”  
He went like wind and cried : “ Glad ever be  
The world-lord ! The tughral is on a bough ;  
E’en now the falconer is taking it.”

The hawk thus found, the old man said : “ O Sháh  
Without a mate or equal on the earth !  
Oh ! may thine entertainer prove auspicious,  
And all the wearers of a crown thy slaves.

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 203 *note*.

Call for a wine-cup in our present joy,  
And, when thou art refreshed, ask what thou wilt.”

C. 1519

The king of kings dismounted at the pool,  
And old Barzín grew glad. With that there came  
Bahrám’s chief minister and therewithal  
The captains of the host and treasurer.  
Barzín brought forth a golden cup and first  
Drank to the monarch of the world, then brought  
And offered to the Sháh a cup of crystal,  
Who seeing took and drained the proffered draught  
Below the inscription-line, whereat Barzín  
In high delight had wine-jars set about  
The place, and in his cups said to his daughters :—  
“ My clever chicks ! no chieftain of the host,  
But Sháh Bahrám hath visited this garden !  
So come, thou songstress ! let us have a song,  
And thou, my moon-faced daughter ! bring thy  
harp.”

All three drew near the Sháh, and on their heads  
Were jewelled crowns. One danced, another played  
Upon the harp, the third possessed a sweet  
And soothing voice. While they made minstrelsy  
The king of kings in high contentment drained  
His goblet dry. He said thus to Barzín :—  
“ What girls are these who live with thee in joy ? ”

Barzín thus answered him : “ O Sháh ! may none  
Behold the age without thee. Know that these  
Are mine own daughters and my heart’s delight.  
One is a caroler, another harpeth,  
The third observeth measure in the dance.  
I need not aught, O Sháh ! for I have money,  
Domain, and pleasure-ground, and my three daughters  
Are, as the Sháh perceiveth, like glad spring.  
O moon-face ! ” said he to the songstress, “ fear not,  
But sing a song about the Sháh.”

The Idols

Took heart to sing and play. The songstress sang :—

“ O moon-faced king ! the moon in heaven  
     Alone is like to thee,  
     The royal throne thine only seat.  
     Thou with thy moon-like blee,

And teak-like stature art the pride  
     Of throne and crown. Oh ! rare  
     For those that see thy face at morn,  
     For those that scent thy hair !

Thy loins are tiger-like, thy limbs  
     Are mighty, thy crown’s Grace  
     Is as the cloud-rack high, and like  
     Pomegranate-bloom thy face.

For rapture of thy love hearts laugh,  
     Like ocean is thine own ;  
     Like cloud thy hand. As thy fit prey  
     I see the lion alone.

Thou splittest with thy shaft a hair,  
     And by thine equity  
     Convertest water into milk.  
     When hostile armies see

Thy lasso and thy puissant arm  
     Their hearts and brains are rent  
     However mighty their array,  
     Howe’er on battle bent.”

Bahrám Gúr, having heard the ditty, drained  
     The massive crystal cup and thus addressed  
     Barzín : “ O noble sir, experienced much  
     Is this world’s heat and cold ! thou wilt not find  
     A better son-in-law than me who am  
     ’Mid kings a hero and the king of men.  
     Bestow thy daughters on me—all the three—

And I will raise thy coronet to Saturn.”

“ O king ! ” Barzín replied, “ may wine and bearer  
 Find favour in thy sight. Who will dare say  
 That he hath such a Venus in his house ?  
 If now thou wilt accept me as a slave  
 To serve before the throne of king of kings  
 Then will I pay my service to thy crown,  
 Thy throne, thy Grace, thy fortune, and thy state ;  
 Moreover my three daughters are thy handmaids  
 To stand before thee as thy slaves. The Sháh  
 Approved of them as such or ever he  
 Saw these three Moons afar. As teaks are they  
 In stature and as ivory in hue,  
 Fit for the throne and to adorn the crown.  
 Now will I tell the monarch of the world  
 What fortune I possess for good and ill :  
 Of clothes and carpets, stuffs and draperies,  
 Good sooth have I stored up in mine abode  
 Two hundred camel-loads or more as well  
 As necklaces and bracelets, crowns and thrones,  
 All for my daughters’ pleasure.”

Hearing this

Bahrám replied : “ Leave what thou hast in store,  
 Where now it is, and seek mirth with the wine-cup.”

The elder answered : “ My three moon-like daughters  
 I give thee by the rites of Gaiúmart  
 And of Húshang. Dust are they ’neath thy feet,  
 And all the three live but to do thy will.”

The eldest daughter’s name was Máh Áfríd,  
 The second’s Farának, and the cadette’s  
 Was Shambalíd. Approving them at sight  
 The Sháh preferred them ’mongst his lawful wives,  
 And bade a noble of his escort bring  
 Four golden litters,<sup>1</sup> and, when all three Idols  
 Were set therein, they were encircled there

<sup>1</sup> The fourth was for himself and needful. See below.

By forty Rúman slaves—their devotees—  
Who called down praises on them as they went.

C. 1521

While they departed to their golden home  
The glorious Sháh caroused. A servant hung  
His whip above the court-gate, for the escort,  
Save by the token of the whip, ne'er knew  
Where Sháh and nobles were. When any one  
Beheld the handle and its lengthy thong  
He used to run thereto and do obeisance.  
Bahrám drank on until he was bemused,  
Then glorious took his seat within a litter,  
And went back to his women's golden house—  
The house that was perfumed with ambergris.  
On his return he tarried for a week,  
And much he feasted, lavished, and held converse.  
The eighth day he went hunting with Rúzbih,  
And with a thousand cavaliers. He saw  
That all the plain was full of onager,  
Drew from its case his royal bow, and strung it,  
Invoking God who giveth victory.  
'Twas springtide and the onager were pairing.  
From all the world they met confronting there,  
And rent each other's hides, the face of earth  
Was reddened with their blood. Bahrám abode  
While two bucks fought together furiously,  
Then when the valiant buck that gained the day  
Was covering a doe he laughed to see  
The onagers, took hold upon his bow-string,  
Shot, piercing the buck's flank so that the arrow  
Went home up to its plumes, and skewered buck  
And doe together, thrilling all his escort.  
All who beheld that shot acclaimed the Sháh :—  
“ Oh ! be the evil eye far from thy Grace,  
And may thy whole life be a festival.  
Such might as thine the age ne'er saw till now ;  
At once Sháh, warrior, and king art thou.”

## § 14

*How Bahrám slew Lions, went to the House of a Jeweller,  
and married his Daughter*

The Sháh, on urging thence his steed Shabrang,  
Came on a forest and beheld before it  
Two savage lions, strung and drew his bow.  
The arrow, striking on the lion's breast,  
Was buried to the plumes. Forthwith Bahrám  
Turned to the lioness and, shooting, pinned  
Her breast and loins together, but exclaimed :—  
“The shaft was featherless, the point was blunt,  
If point there were.”

C. 1522

The escort praised him, saying :—  
O famous king of earth ! none ever saw,  
Or will see, on the throne of king of kings  
A Sháh like thee, who with unfeathered arrows  
O'erthrowest lions, and with plumed uprootest  
A mount of flint.”

The monarch with his meiny  
Rode on along the meadow-land and saw  
A forest full of sheep, their herds in flight  
For fear of harm. The chief herd, ne'er at ease  
For terror of wild beasts, perceived Bahrám,  
Who said to him : “ What man is driving sheep  
To this unlikely spot ? ”

The head man answered :—  
“ Great sir ! none cometh to this pasturage  
Except myself. They are a jeweller's :  
I drove them from the mountains yesterday.  
The owner is a wealthy man not troubled  
By fear of loss.<sup>1</sup> He owneth gems by ass-loads,  
Gold, silver, trinketry. He hath withal  
One only daughter, skilful on the harp.  
Her tresses cluster on her head in curls.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P

He will take wine from her hand only. None  
Hath seen an old man like him. How could he  
Have kept his property but by the justice  
Of Sháh Bahrám ? The great king of the world  
Is not concerned for gold, and his archmages  
Are not unjust ; but say who slew these beasts,  
For may the Ruler of the world uphold him ? ”

Bahrám replied : “ This pair of lions fell  
Beneath the arrows of a valiant man,  
Who, having slain these gallant beasts, departed  
With seven other gallant cavaliers.  
Where is the jeweller’s mansion ? Point the way,  
And hide it not from us.”

The chief hind said :—  
“ Proceed and thou wilt reach a brand-new seat.  
The jeweller thence fareth to the city,  
To Sháh Bahrám’s own palace, but, what time  
The sun doth don its Sable Silk, returneth  
To banquet. Revelling and sound of lyre  
Will reach thine ears if thou wilt bide a while.”

Bahrám, on hearing this, called for his steed,  
And for apparel suited to a king,  
Then parted from his minister and escort.  
Good sooth ! but he was full of eagerness !  
Rúzbih said to the chiefs : “ So now the Sháh  
Is going to the village, there to knock  
Upon the portal of the jeweller ! ”

C. 1523 And, mark my words ! will ask of him his daughter,  
And crown her doubtless with a crown of gold,  
Will take her to his ladies’ golden house,  
And send that other three back to Barzín ! <sup>1</sup>  
He never hath enough of chambering ;  
His consort flitteth ere the night is over !  
He hath above a hundred ladies’ bowers !  
’Tis ill to have a king of kings like this.

<sup>1</sup> See previous section.

Just now a eunuch reckoned up nine hundred  
 And thirty damsels wearing jewelled crowns  
 Within the palace, all provided for !  
 The Sháh demandeth tribute from all lands,  
 And Rúm will be exhausted in a year.  
 Alack ! for shoulders, breast, and height like his,  
 And face that brightened all the company !  
 None will behold his like in strength and stature,  
 Who pinneth with one shaft two onagers ;  
 But dalliance with women marreth him,  
 He soon will be as feeble as a ghost !  
 His eyes will darken and his looks grow wan,  
 His body slacken and his cheeks turn blue.  
 To sniff at women maketh hoary heads,  
 And hoary heads have naught to hope on earth.  
 As polo-playing maketh stoop the upright,  
 So womanizing causeth every ill.  
 Once in a month is intercourse enough,  
 While more is waste of blood. A wise youth too  
 Should husband vigour for his children's sake.  
 In this excess there is excess of loss,  
 And slackness is afflictive to a man."

They went back to the palace, talking still,  
 And one remarked : "The Sun hath lost his way."

Bahrám Gúr, with one slave to mind his horse,  
 Fared through the gloom of night and, when he neared  
 The jeweller's abode, heard sounds of harping,  
 Whereto he urged Gulgún, his steed, forthwith  
 Toward the merchant's house. He knocked and asked  
 Admittance, all the while invoking Him  
 Who made the sun. A kindly handmaid said :—  
 "Who's there ? Why knock thus at this time of  
 night ? "

Bahrám replied : "This morning as the Sháh  
 Was coming from the hunting-ground my horse  
 Went lame, and I perforce got left behind.

Here in this thoroughfare the folk will steal  
 A steed like this and my gold harness too,  
 So I need help."

The handmaid went and told  
 Her lord : " A man requesteth shelter, saying :  
 ' My steed with its gold harness will be stolen,  
 And I shall go away undone.' "

He answered :—

" Then ope the door. Hast never seen a guest  
 Come here before ? "

C. 1524

The maid made haste to open,  
 And said : " Come in, my son ! "

The Sháh on entering,  
 And seeing such a place and such attendance,  
 Said to himself : " O just and only God !  
 Thou art Thy servant's Guide to what is good.  
 Ne'er may I be but just in conduct, never  
 Be covetise and arrogance my creed,  
 Let every act and deed of mine be just,  
 And let my subjects' hearts rejoice in me :  
 Then, if my knowledge and my justice wax,  
 My memory will shine when I am dead.  
 May all my subjects, like this jeweller,  
 Enjoy the sound of harp and revelry."

On entering the lofty hall he saw  
 The jeweller's famed daughter from the door.  
 The thane, on seeing him, arose and came  
 With bows profound, and said : " Good ev'n to thee.  
 May all thy foemen's hearts be rooted out."

The host spread out a mat and laid thereon  
 A cushion, gazing at his guest with joy.  
 One brought a sumptuous board with viands hot  
 And cold thereon. One came—a faithful liege—  
 And was instructed to secure the steed.  
 Elsewhere they lodged and fed Bahrám Gúr's servant.  
 They set a low seat for the host himself,

Who took his place close to his guest the Sháh,  
 And then began to offer his excuse,  
 Thus saying to Bahrám : “ Brave paladin !  
 Since thou art entertained within my house  
 Conform thyself to my rough usages.  
 When we have eaten we must drink and then  
 Rest sweetly. ’Tis dark night, the wine is royal ;  
 When thou hast drunk thy quantum thou shalt sleep,  
 And, when thou wakest at the break of day,  
 Must haste back to the service of the Sháh.”

Bahrám replied : “ Night dark when one alighteth  
 On cheery host like thee ! We must not prove  
 Ingrate to God ; the hearts of thankless men  
 Are full of fear.”

The handmaid, who was all  
 Astonied at the aspect of the guest,  
 Brought water, bowl, and napkin. Hands were washed.  
 Then came the wine-cup’s turn, and with the wine  
 Came mirth, contentment, and tranquillity.  
 The handmaid brought a flagon and strong drink,  
 Red wine, a cup, and flowers of fenugreek.  
 The thane first reached out for the cup and drank,  
 Then washed it out with musk and with rose-water,  
 And gave the cup that cheereth to Bahrám.  
 “ What,” said he, “ is my boon-companion’s name ?  
 Now will I make a covenant with thee,  
 And I will take Bahrám, the Sháh, as surety.”

The king laughed heartily thereat and said :—      C. 1525  
 “ Gushasp, the cavalier, am I, and hither  
 Came I attracted by the sound of harp,  
 And not to drink or while away the time.”

“ This girl of mine,” his host replied, “ exalteth  
 My head to heaven and is at once my harper,  
 And my cup-bearer, and withal she singeth,  
 And dissipateth care. My Heart’s Delight  
 Is named Árzú—my heart’s delight and server.”

He said to that tall Cypress : " Bring thy harp,  
Come in thy loveliness before Gushasp."

The harpist, tall as a pomegranate-tree,  
Moved stately to the king of kings and said :—  
" O chosen cavalier who hast in all  
The semblance of a king ! know that this house  
Of feasting is thine own, my sire thy host  
And treasurer. May thy dark nights be joyous,  
And be thy head exalted o'er the rain-clouds."

He said to her : " Sit down, take up thy harp,  
And let us have a song immediately.  
To-night old Máhiyár shall be a youth,  
And pledge his soul as hostage for his guest."

The harpist clasped her harp and first she played  
The Magians' chant, and as the silken chords  
Rang out an odour as of jasmine filled  
The room. She sang to Máhiyár, her sire,  
And thou hadst said : " How plaintive is her harp ! "

" Thou art as a cypress  
That lippeth a stream,  
And white locks encircle  
Thy cheeks' rosy gleam.

Thy tongue is warm-spoken,  
Thy heart loveth peace,  
Oh ! ne'er may thy foemen  
Of ill have surcease.

Thy soul's food be wisdom.  
Thy bent is as great  
As Farídún's. On thee  
As handmaid I wait.

Árzú am I titled,  
I joy in our guest,  
Like monarch whose troops are  
With victory blest."

This ditty done, toward the guest she turned,  
Turned toward him with a song and plaintive chords :—

“ Sincere and brave, high-starred and king-like one !  
They that ne’er saw Bahrám, the cavalier,  
The well approved, to every bosom dear,  
Should look upon thy face, and all is done.

His only semblance in the host thou art,  
Tall as a cypress with a reed-like waist,  
A cypress with a pheasant’s carriage graced,  
An elephant in bulk with lion’s heart.

Two miles in fight thou flingest forth thy spear,  
Thy cheeks as though pomegranate-blossoms shine  
(Who was it washed, say’st thou, those blooms in  
wine ?)

And as a camel’s thighs thine arms appear.

Thou tramplest Mount Bístún. Heaven toiled to  
mould

C. 1526

A man like thee. None see I to compete  
In strife with thee. As dust beneath thy feet  
Oh ! may Árzú’s form be while life shall hold.”

The girl’s proficiency with song and harp,  
Her looks, her stature, and accomplishments,  
So wrought the world-lord that thou wouldest have  
said :—

“ His heart hath grown a magazine of woes,”  
And at the time when Máhiyár grew drunk  
Before him he addressed his host, thus saying :—  
“ Give me thy daughter as my lawful wife  
If thou wouldest be commended for just dealing.”

“ Wilt thou accept,” said Máhiyár to her,  
“ The presents of this lion-hearted man ?  
See if he pleaseth thee, and if ’tis well  
For thee to go with him.”

Árzú replied :—

“ Good, noble father !<sup>1</sup> if thou wouldest bestow me  
On any then my partner is Gushasp,  
The cavalier. One that doth look upon  
A man like this will bid Bahrám ‘ Avaunt ! ’ ”

His daughter’s words misliked him and he said  
Thus to Bahrám : “ O horseman of the fray !  
Regard her carefully from head to foot,  
Her industry, her knowledge, and discretion ;  
See if she be approved of thee at heart ;  
Report of her is better than assumption.  
She is at once accomplished and no beggar ;  
I do not specify exact amounts,  
But shouldst thou count the gems of Máhiyár  
They would exceed those in the royal coffers.  
Be not precipitate, take rest to-night,  
And, if needs must, another cup of wine,  
For great men make no compacts in their cups  
Especially about their lady-loves.  
Wait therefore till the sun shall rise on high,  
And till the nobles’ heads have roused from  
sleep,  
Then will we call far-seeing elders in—  
Disinterested men and scholarly.  
At night ’tis out of order and ignoreth  
The precedents of Farídún, the Sháh.  
Ill-omened ’tis to marry in one’s cups  
Or handsel any business.”

Said Bahrám :—

“ Absurd ! ’Tis ill to draw, or go by, omens.  
This harpist pleaseth me to-night, so strive  
To deem the matter an auspicious one.”

The sire said to his daughter : “ O Árzú !  
Dost thou approve him as to looks and manners ? ”  
She said : “ Yea, I approved of him when I  
Far off beheld him with such head and eyes.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Complete the work and leave the rest to God :  
The sky is not at feud with Máhiyár."

Her father answered : "Thou art now his wife.  
Know this that thou art under coverture."

He gave her to Bahrám Gúr who espoused her ;  
By dawn the matter had been consummate.  
The Sháh's attendant hung the royal whip  
Upon the door of Máhiyár, Arzú  
Went to her chamber while on every side  
Folk still were sleeping. Máhiyár departed  
To make all ready for the cavalier,  
Gushasp, and told a servant : "Shut the doors,  
And send off some one to the flock in haste.  
They must not serve the board without a lamb,  
And one well fattened too. Wait on Gushasp,  
And, when he waketh, bring him ice and sherbet,<sup>1</sup>  
Take too a bowl of camphor and rose-water  
To scent his chamber. As for me, my cups  
Have left me just as I was yesterday ;  
Old jewellers shirk not their wine."

He spake,

And, drawing up his cloak about his head,  
Wooed rest and sleep.

When bright Sol showed its crown,  
And earth became like shining ivory,  
Troops armed with shields and double-headed darts  
Went to seek traces of the royal whip.  
The escort gathered round the door as though  
The Sháh's own court, and all that recognised  
The whip came forward and saluted it.  
The porter, seeing that great gathering,  
The throng of swordsmen and of javelin-men,  
Went, roused his sleeping lord, and sobered him,  
Thus saying to him : "Rise, bestir thyself ;  
This is no time to sleep or place to sit,

C. 1527

<sup>1</sup> Fakká'. See Vol. i. p. 43 note.

Because the world's king is thy guest within  
This sorry house of thine ! ”

The jeweller's heart  
Throbbed wildly at the words. He cried : “ What  
say'st thou ? ”

How tracest thou the footsteps of the king ? ”

Then fully realising what was said  
He sprang up from the bed-clothes with a shout,  
Enraged against the porter, “ These,” he cried,  
“ Are not the words of wisdom and of age.”

“ Experienced man ! ” the slave said, “ who on earth  
Made thee the monarch of Írán ? So vast  
A host is at thy gate that, wouldest thou pass,  
There is scant room, and every Jack of them,  
On coming up, saluteth our old curtain ! <sup>1</sup>  
At dawn, before the sun began to shine,  
The cavalier's attendant came and hung  
A whip all gold and jewels o'er our entry,  
Where we pass through it, and round that long whip  
There is a world of folk from hill and dale.  
So now be up and doing, be not slack,  
And let not wine affect thee.”

C. 1528

Hearing this,  
The shrewd old man was troubled : “ Why did I  
Get drunk last night before the king of kings,  
And let my daughter share the wine with us ? ”

Then going to the chamber of Árzú  
He said : “ My gracious Moon ! it was Bahrám,  
The king of kings, that last night visited  
The jeweller ! On coming from the chase  
He hither turned his rein. Now up and don  
Brocade of Rúm and set upon thy head  
Thy last night's crown. Make him an offering  
Of jewels worthy of a king—three rubies  
Of royal worth—and, when thou shalt behold

<sup>1</sup> The felt curtain at the door-way. Cf. p. 69.

His sun-like face, enfold thine arms before him,  
 Keep thine eyes fixed on him and think of him  
 As thine own soul and body. Answer meekly  
 When he shall question thee, and let thy words  
 Be modest and discreet. I shall not come  
 Unless he calleth me and giveth me  
 A place among his followers. I sat  
 At table with him like his peer ! Oh ! would  
 That I had no bones in me ! Furthermore  
 I cottoned with the Sháh when in my cups !  
 Wine maketh old and young to misdemean.”

Just then a slave came hurrying and said :—  
 “ The Sháh, that ardent spirit, is awake.”

Now when the Sháh woke safe and sound, he went  
 To bathe him in the garden, went to pray  
 Before the sun, confiding all to God.  
 Returning thence to the reception-room  
 He bade a server bring a cup of wine,  
 Heard that his retinue had come, dismissed it,  
 And called Arzú on whom his heart was set.<sup>1</sup>  
 Arzú appeared with wine and offerings—  
 A handmaid with her necklace and her earrings—  
 And with a lowly reverence kissed the ground.  
 The Sháh smiled on her greatly pleased and said :—  
 “ Whence such behaviour—first to make me drunk,  
 Then run away ? Thy song and harp suffice  
 For me, a woman’s presents are for others.  
 Come sing to me thy ditties of the chase,  
 Of spearhead-blows, and royal combatings.”

Anon he said : “ Where is the jeweller,  
 For we got drunk together yesternight ? ”

The daughter, when she heard this, called her father,  
 Mazed at the Sháh’s good-nature. Came her sire C. 1529  
 With folded arms before the sun-like king

<sup>1</sup> Árzú means “ Desire,” and there is a double use of the word in the original : “ Because he had a desire for Desire.”

Of kings, and said : “ O Sháh ! O chief ! O wise !  
 O great ! O mighty one ! O warrior !  
 O archimage ! may this world ever be  
 At thy dispose and everywhere thy name  
 Associate with the crown. The man that quaffeth  
 The draught of foolishness should hold his tongue.  
 My fault was due to ignorance. Methinketh  
 That thou must deem me mad. Vouchsafe to pardon  
 My fault and make my face and faring bright.  
 I stand—a foolish slave—before thy door ;  
 The king of kings will deem me less than man.”

Bahrám replied : “ The wise man never taketh  
 The drunkard seriously ; one should not eye  
 Or savour wine if it make sad the face.  
 I saw thee not ill-tempered in thy cups.  
 Now listen to the singing of Árzú,  
 And proffer as thine own apology  
 The tulips and the jasmine of her song.  
 Let her descant what while we quaff, not counting  
 The ill of days not come.”

He kissed the ground,

Did Máhiyár, then brought and spread the board,  
 And, good man that he was, he fetched withal  
 The nobles that were stationed at the gate ;  
 Howbeit Árzú went off to her own bower,  
 Her visage puckered at those stranger-guests,  
 And stayed till heaven grew sombre, and the stars  
 Came out around the moon. The eating done,  
 Árzú was called and set upon a seat  
 Of golden work. The Sháh bade her to take  
 Her harp and sing to him the song that he  
 Had asked of her already. Thus she sang :—

“ O monarch undaunted ! the lion in shame  
 Will slink from the wood at the bruit of thy name.  
 Sháh, victor, host-breaker art thou. In thy mien

The tints of the tulip on jasmine are seen.  
 In stature no ruler on earth is thy peer,  
 In looks thou transcendest the moon in her sphere.  
 A host on the war-stead, beholding in fight  
 Thy helmet, will rive, heart and brain, with affright,  
 And longer discern not the depth from the height.”

When they were blithe with wine and, eating done,  
 Were quaffing draught on draught, Rúzbih appeared  
 Before the Sháh. They lodged him in the village.  
 Rúzbih had brought a litter and withal  
 Two score of eunuchs, all moon-face and charming.  
 Those Rúmans' faces seemed brocade of Rúm,  
 And freshened all the country round. Árzú,  
 A crown of jewels set upon her head,  
 Toward the bower of Sháh Bahrám Gúr sped.

## § 15

*How Bahrám went to the Chase and passed the Night  
 in the House of Farshidward*

The king of kings, attended by Rúzbih,  
 Went from the chief's house with a gladsome heart. C. 1530  
 He passed the night and went at dawn to hunt.  
 Troops fared o'er all the roads and trackless wastes,  
 And thus abode a month. They pitched the tents  
 And camp-enclosure, and swept all the field  
 Of game. None slumbered there, it was all wine,  
 Game, flesh, and harp, and lyre. They kindled fires  
 About the plain and burned wood green and dry.  
 There came a swarm of dealers from the city,  
 Who tarried at the camp for trafficking :  
 The crowd made bright the waste. At quarter price  
 They bought one onager or ten gazelles,  
 And whosoever was in want of meat,  
 For cooking for his guests or for his children,

Might carry home ground-game and water-fowl  
By ass-loads.

When a month had passed Bahrám  
Grew eager for his wives' society,  
And led his people from the hunting-ground.  
Folk could not see the way, the cavaliers  
Raised such a dust ! but swift as dust they sped  
Till day's cheeks turned to lapis-lazuli.  
The Sháh observed a town in front of him  
With groups of houses, roadways, and bázárs,  
And ordered that his escort with the baggage  
Should push on, leaving not a soul behind.  
He asked : " Where is the chief man of the place ? "  
And then made thither straightway. He beheld  
A shattered entry broad and deep. The owner  
Came and saluted him. The Sháh inquired :—  
" Whose ruin is this and wherefore in such plight  
Amidst the town ? "

The master said : " 'Tis mine,  
And ill luck is my guide. I have not here  
Kine, raiment, victuals, manhood, understanding,  
No feet, no wings. Me thou hast seen, now view  
My house—one fitter for a curse than blessing."

The aspiring Sháh alighted, scanned the house,  
And hands and feet both failed him, for the place  
Was all sheep's droppings though both great and  
vaulted !

C. 1531 " Bring me," he said, " thou hospitable man !  
Somewhat whereon to sit."

The other answered :—  
" Why mock thy host so wantonly, O marchlord !  
Had I some draperies my guest would praise me,  
But I have none, no clothing, food, or carpets.  
Pray lodge thee somewhere else ; here all is poor."

The Sháh said : " Fetch a cushion then that I  
May sit awhile."

" The place is ill," he answered.

"Good sooth ! wouldst thou have bird's milk ? "

Said Bahrám :—

"Bring fresh milk and new bread if thou canst get it."

"Imagine," said the other, "that thou hast  
Partaken and gone off with 'Fare thee well.'  
I should not be so lifeless had I bread,  
Though life were better far than bread to me."

Bahrám said : "If thou hast no sheep how come  
These droppings here ? "

"'Tis night," the other answered.

"My head is all a muddle with thy talk.  
Select some mansion with a curtained entrance ;  
The master of it will command thy choice.  
Why shouldst thou be with an unfortunate,  
Who maketh leaves his pillow for the night ?  
Thou hast a golden sword and stirrups, thou  
Shouldst sojourn not where there is fear of thieves,  
For thieves and lions haunt old hulks like this."

The Sháh said : "If a thief should rob me now  
Thou wouldst not be responsible, but give me  
A lodging for the night, 'tis all I need."

"Then need it not," the owner made reply ;  
"None lodgeth in my house."

"O wise old man !

Why art thou," said the Sháh, "so short with me ?  
Still thou wilt give me, I presume, cold water,  
O noble one ! "

"Didst thou not see," rejoined  
The householder, "more than two bow-shots long<sup>1</sup>  
The pool ? There drink and take whate'er thou wilt.  
Why seek for aught in this impoverished house ?  
Good sooth ! hast never seen a poor man barred  
From working by decrepitude ? "

Bahrám

Rejoined : "Thou art not one of the first water,

<sup>1</sup> Or "hence." So Mohl.

Chief though thou be ; so strive not with a soldier.  
What is thy name ? ”

He answered : “ Farshídward,  
A man without land, raiment, sleep, and food.”

Bahrám asked : “ Why endeavour not for provand  
And comfort ? ”

Said the master of the house :—

“ He that bestoweth all may end my days.

C. 1532 If only I can see my desolation

Relieved of thee I will make prayer to Him.

Why cam’st thou to an empty house that never  
Saw good condition and a high estate ? ”

When he had spoken thus he wept so sorely  
That Sháh Bahrám fled from his cries. He laughed  
At that old man and took the road again,  
While all his escort followed in his train.

### § 16

*How a Bramble-grubber revealed the Case of Farshídward, and  
how Bahrám bestowed that Householder’s Wealth upon the  
Poor*

Bahrám, on quitting that famed township, came  
Upon a bramble-brake. A man, who held  
A mattock in his hand, was grubbing there.  
The monarch left his retinue, drew near him,  
And said : “ O enemy of brambles ! whom  
Know’st thou of most account in yonder town ? ”

He answered : “ Farshídward—a man of greed  
That doth not suffer him to sleep or eat.  
He hath, may be, a hundred thousand sheep,  
More camels, steeds, and asses. Earth is full  
Of his amassed dínárs, but would that he  
Had neither skin nor marrow to his body !

A famished paunch and nakedness are his ;  
 He hath no child, no kin, no friends, no goods.  
 A captive in the hands of Greed and Need  
 His person is all misery and wasted  
 Through eating not, but if he were to sell  
 For gold his tilth 'twould purchase gems enough  
 To fill a house ! His shepherds swill down flesh  
 With milk, but he himself hath millet-bread  
 Without e'en cheese ! He never saw two coats  
 At once ; he is a tyrant to himself."

The Sháh said to the grubber : " Thou dost know  
 The number of his sheep, but knowest thou  
 Where those flocks are and likewise where his steeds  
 And camels are at large ? "

The grubber said :—

" O thou ! it is not far from here to where  
 His camels and his sheep are, but my heart  
 Is troubled at the ill that he may do me."

Bahrám Gúr gave the grubber some dínárs,  
 And said : " This day shall gentle thy condition."

He bade one of his escort come to him,  
 A man that knew his way about, by name  
 Bihruz, a horseman brave and popular,  
 And sent with him a hundred cavaliers,  
 Selected men well suited to the work.  
 He chose withal a scribe, an honest man  
 And skilled accountant. " Go," he told the grubber, C. 1533  
 " Thou didst grub brambles, now reap gold. One  
 hundredth  
 Of all that wealth is thine. Show to these men  
 The way."

The grubber's name was Diláfrúz,  
 A man of stately mien and stalwart form.  
 Bahrám bestowed on him a noble steed,  
 And said : " Thou must companion with the wind."

He was the Light of hearts but he became

The Lustre of the world <sup>1</sup> and carried out  
 His task triumphantly. He led the troop  
 O'er hill and plain past countless flocks of sheep.  
 Upon the mountains were ten caravans  
 Of camels, each with its own caravaneer.  
 The scribe wrote down of draught and of milch cattle  
 Twelve thousand, and the number of the camels  
 And steeds as twice ten thousand. All the waste  
 Was dinted with their hoofs. Beside the stream  
 There were three hundred thousand camel-loads  
 Of potted butter and curds fresh and dried.<sup>2</sup>  
 Height, waste, and level were one mighty cache,  
 But none had heard thereof. Bihrúz, the son  
 Of Húr, reported to the king of kings,  
 Bahrám Gúr, praising first almighty God,  
 The All-victorious and All-nourisher,  
 And next the king of kings who had released  
 Men's hands from toil, and then proceeded thus :—  
 “ O monarch of the world ! thou art the joy  
 Of all folk great and small because thy justice  
 Surpasseth bounds. Our treasury hath suffered  
 Through silence as to this man's wealth. 'Tis well  
 That all things in the world should have their  
 bounds,  
 Well that the Sháh be boundlessly rejoiced.  
 A wretch there is named Farshídward, unknown  
 In feast and fight to great and small alike  
 Throughout the world, not fearing God or Sháh,  
 And thankless in respect of what he hath.  
 While thus he streweth o'er the world his wealth  
 He is a lack-all, wretched, secretive,  
 Who is as unjust as the Sháh is just.  
 Blame not my words and counsel. Let this wealth  
 Inaugurate a treasury ; 'twill need

<sup>1</sup> He was, i.e. his name was, Diláfrúz, but he became Gítíáfrúz.

<sup>2</sup> For winter use.

Three years to order it. I have invoked  
 To mine assistance certain other scribes,  
 And settled them upon this fertile mount,  
 But, though the writers' backs are bent, not yet  
 Is manifest the sum of this man's treasure ;  
 Moreover he possesseth, so folk say,  
 Still greater buried hoards of gold and jewels.  
 Here in the mountain am I with both eyes  
 Upon the road to know the Sháh's commands.  
 My salutation to him. May he live  
 What while his name is all in all to all.”<sup>1</sup>

C. 1534

He sent a cameleer post haste to bear  
 The letter to the Sháh. Whenas Bahrám Gúr  
 Had read it he was troubled in his heart,  
 Grew downcast, wept, and bent his warrior-brows.  
 He called for Rúman pens and silk of Chín,  
 And bade a scribe approach. He first gave thanks  
 To God almighty, the omniscient Guide,  
 “The Lord of knowledge and of Grace, the Lord  
 Of diadem and kingship,” then wrote thus :—  
 “I should by rights attach this man. He hath not  
 Amassed these hoards by thievery and bloodshed,  
 Hath not incited others to do wrong,  
 But he hath been ungrateful and not had  
 The fear of God within him, hath kept ward  
 O'er all this treasure to the detriment,  
 By such amassing, both of heart and soul.  
 Wolf is as good as sheep upon yon plain  
 Since neither yieldeth profit or return.  
 A buried gem is nothing but a stone,  
 Affording no one either food or raiment.  
 We shall not found a treasury on his toils,  
 Or fix our heart upon this Wayside Inn.  
 Evanished from the world are Farídún,  
 Fraj withal, Túr, and, amidst the mighty,

<sup>1</sup> Lit. “is (both) warp and woof.”

Sám, Sháh Káús, and Kai Kubád, besides  
 The other potentates whose names we cherish,  
 And mine own sire who filled my heart with pain  
 As being neither just nor generous.  
 None of these great men is in evidence ;  
 Herein there is no striving with the Lord.  
 Collect this treasure and distribute it,  
 But touch not thou one hair. To every one  
 That hideth his necessities and looketh  
 Long vainly for remission from his ills ;  
 To old men past their work and despicable  
 In rich men's eyes ; to those that have spent all,  
 And now in trouble breathe forth chilling sighs ;  
 To those that have renown but not dínárs ;  
 To traders reft of friends ; to little ones  
 Whom thou beholdest orphans, their sires dead,  
 And they themselves in want of gold and silver ;  
 To women that have neither spouse nor raiment,  
 That know no handicraft and no employment,  
 Give all these treasures and irradiate  
 The lives of those poor souls. This done, neglect not  
 The hidden treasures, but bestow the hoards  
 Of Farshídward upon the mendicants  
 For their relief. Dínárs and gems are dust  
 To him since he must needs go bury them.  
 May turning heaven be thy companion,  
 All justice mayst thou be and self-restraint."

They set the Sháh's seal on the document,  
 And thereupon the courier turned and went.

§ 17

*How Bahrám went to the Chase and slew Lions*

Bahrám bade slaves set up the imperial throne  
 Within the pleasance, then in spring-tide beauty.

They brought the turquoise throne at his command,  
 And set it 'neath a blossom-shedding tree,  
 They brought forth wine and cups, and minstrels went  
 Toward the pleasance with the chiefs. The king  
 Said to his counsellors : "This is the time  
 Of jollity for men. We all must couch ;  
 Death treadeth under foot the rolls of fame,  
 The hall and palace. We shall have enough  
 Of our own company within the charnel,  
 Men both of mien and stature though we be.  
 The king and beggar carry when they die  
 Naught but their good and ill away with them.  
 What toil soe'er men bear is only loss,  
 For, when they perish, that will perish too.  
 That praise of us remaineth is enough,  
 For crown and girdle are another's share.  
 Thou needest innocence and uprightness  
 That thine enjoyments prove not seath to thee.  
 My years exceed already eight and thirty,  
 And many a day hath fleeted in delight,  
 But, after two score years, grief for the day  
 Of death is instant with us. If one hair  
 Turn white upon our heads we must forgo  
 All hope of joy ; when musk becometh camphor  
 'Tis ruined ; camphor suiteth not the crown.  
 Two years more will I spend in feast and sport,  
 Then, when my strength is somewhat broken, go  
 Before God's presence, don the woollen robe,  
 And be not thankless for His mercies to me,  
 For I have passed my days in joy and had  
 My share of royal crown. Now for the rose,  
 The apple, the pomegranate, and the quince !  
 Let not the golden goblet fail of wine !<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Bábar (A.D. 1483-1530) in his diary made similar good resolutions, which he did not keep : "As I intend, when forty years old, to abstain from wine ; and as I now want somewhat less than one year of being forty, *I drink wine most copiously.*" EHI, iv. 226.

C. 1536

But when I see the apples amber-cheeked,  
 The heavens dappled like a leopard's back,  
 The fragrant camomile producing seed,  
 And wine as ruddy as the reveller,  
 When air is pleasant, neither hot nor cold,  
 Earth fresh and water blue, what time we don  
 Our autumn furs, I must to Jaz to hunt,  
 And hold a hunting-bout upon that plain  
 To make me a memorial in the world.  
 Meanwhile the onager will grow plump-necked,  
 And compass lion's heart and tiger's strength.  
 We must take dogs and cheetahs, hawks and falcons,<sup>1</sup>  
 For that far faring since it is the spot  
 For onager and archery, and there  
 No moment will we rest from chevying.  
 The plain that I have set mine eyes upon  
 Is lower Jaz. There tamarisks are tall  
 As spear-shafts, there too we shall find the lion,  
 And have a hunting if we bide our time."

He waited till the clouds of Shahrvár  
 Arose, then all the world was filled with troops.  
 From every clime an army keen for strife  
 Set face toward the monarch of Írán,  
 Who chose among them chiefs of note as hunters,  
 And carried with him to the chase a force  
 Of thirty thousand mounted Scimitars.  
 They took with them pavilions, tent-enclosures,  
 Tents, beasts, and shielings, while the underlings  
 Went on before Bahrám Gúr to dig wells,  
 To furnish them withal with wheel and bucket,  
 And run the water into troughs. The Sháh  
 Came later with his meiny to the chase.  
 He saw the plain well stocked with onager,  
 The woods alive with lions, and thus said :—

<sup>1</sup> Two sorts of falcons are mentioned in the text—the charkh and the sháhín (*falco sacer* and *falco peregrinator*?).

" Wine is our quarry to-night, for on the sand  
 Are many lion-tracks, and we must have  
 A lion-hunt to-morrow. Rest ye then  
 In health of body and in merry pin,  
 And let us drink till daybreak, till the sun—  
 The lustre of the world—is bright again.  
 Our scimitars shall fell the lions first,  
 Shall fell those valiant dragons. When the woods  
 Are cleared of lions then the onager  
 Shall yield himself a servant to my shafts."

He stayed that night and, when the morning dawned,  
 Approached the forest with his men, whereat  
 A lion, lusty-grown with battening  
 On onagers, rushed forth, and brave Bahrám  
 Said to his friends : " Though I have bow and arrows,  
 And mastery therewith, I will assail  
 Yon lion with the scimitar that none  
 May call me coward."

Donning a shrunk vest  
 Of wool he mounted on his battle-steed.  
 Now when that dragon of a lion saw him  
 It reared, brought down its claws, and sought to strike  
 The charger on the head.<sup>1</sup> The warrior heeled  
 His steed and with his trenchant scimitar,  
 What while the lioness made off apace,  
 Struck at the lion's head and clave the beast  
 Down to its middle, filling lions' hearts  
 With fear ; yet gallantly another one  
 Came roaring, one whose mate was suckling cubs.  
 He smote that lion's neck and parted head  
 From trunk. One said to him : " O sun-faced Sháh !  
 Hast thou not any mercy on thyself ?  
 The wood is full of lions and their young—

C. 1537

<sup>1</sup> Blanford describes a lioness attacking his horse much in this way, and remarks that Persian sporting pictures generally represent the lion as leaping, not rearing. EP, ii. 32.

Cubs that are sucklings. Let the lions be,  
 For in the autumn-time they breed. This forest  
 Is three leagues deep, and if thou wert to spend  
 A year in taking lions wouldest not clear it ;  
 So why impose such labour on thyself ?  
 The Sháh, when first he sat upon the throne,  
 Fought lions only as the compact was.<sup>1</sup>  
 Now thou art Sháh, the world is thine, so why  
 Fight with them still ? Thou cam'st for onager."

" Old sage," the Sháh said, " let to-morrow dawn,  
 And heigh for onager and shaft and me !  
 But cavaliers and nobles now alive  
 Can rival me in archery, so when  
 We give its due to manhood we must take  
 Account of iron mace and scimitar."

The archmage said : " Hadst thou ten horsemen  
 with thee,  
 And like thee in the fight, then Rúm and Chín  
 Would have no crown and throne, and men of wisdom  
 Would ship their goods off. Be the evil eye  
 Far from thy Grace, and be it thine to feast  
 Among the roses."

Then with archimages,  
 And captains of the host, the Sháh departed  
 Toward his tent-enclosure from the wood  
 What while the troops acclaimed him, saying thus :—  
 " Ne'er may the crown and signet-ring lack thee."

That paladin then entered his pavilion,  
 His escort quitting him, and washed his hands  
 Of sweat. He had with him a trusty steward,  
 Who draped a fresh tent for him. There they set  
 Musk, camphor, and rose-water, and spread musk  
 Withal upon the sleeping-place. Each tent  
 Had golden tables laid with services  
 Of ware of Chín where lamb and other meats

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 405 seq.

Were served by the chief server. Sháh Bahrám Gúr,  
 The eating done, called for a mighty cup  
 Of crystal, which a fairy-faced cup-bearer  
 Brought and consigned it to the just king's hands,  
 Who said : " Ardshír, the great king, he whose fortune  
 Made old folk young, was founder of our house,  
 And we are underlings if we be worthy  
 E'en of that title. Both in fight and feast,  
 At counsel and at board, give none but him  
 The title of world's lord. What time Sikandar  
 Came to Frán from Rúm and wrecked the land,  
 Since he was both ungenerous and harsh,  
 And slew kings six and thirty, monarchs' lips  
 Are full of curses, and earth's surface full  
 Of vengeance, on him.<sup>1</sup> Farídún they praise,  
 And he is cursed by stirrers up of strife.  
 Throughout the world may only good proceed  
 From me to small and great. Bring me a herald,"  
 He added, " one of goodly voice and leading,  
 Let him go round the host and thus proclaim  
 O'er way and waste alike : ' Whoe'er shall lay  
 Within the region of Barkúh and Jaz <sup>2</sup>  
 Unlawful hands on aught, from jewels, gold,  
 Dínárs, and furs to mean and worthless chaff,  
 Him will I horse face tail-wards and will have  
 Two of the soldiery to lead him hence.  
 His feet shall be made fast beneath his steed,  
 And to the temple of Ázargashasp  
 Will I dispatch him there to supplicate  
 All-holy God and worship in the dust  
 Before the Fire. I will bestow his goods  
 On those whom he hath robbed and wronged withal.  
 If any horse shall injure growing crops,  
 Or harm fruit-bearing trees, the horse's owner,

C. 1538

<sup>1</sup> The Persian pre-Muhammadan view of Sikandar. Cf. Vol. vi. p. 15.<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

Be he a noble or of no account,  
 Shall not escape a year's imprisonment.  
 My work is but to carry from the desert  
 My portion, then go home again rejoicing.' "

The more part of the traffickers of Jaz,  
 And of Barkúh, went out upon the plain,  
 And with their various packs produced a scene  
 About the host like a bázár in Chín.

§ 18

*How Bahrám went to hunt the Onager, showed his Skill before  
 the Princes, and returned to Baghdád and Istakhr*

Whenas the sun next day displayed its crown  
 The world-lord went to hunt the onager ;  
 The soldiers strung their bows, the Sháh himself  
 Rode in the rear. He said : " If one should take  
 His bow to shoot at any beast the arrow  
 Should strike the buttocks and come through the  
 breast."

A paladin replied : " O king ! consider  
 Who in this noble host can shoot like that  
 Among thy friends or foes unless indeed  
 Thou shoot in person. May thy head and crown  
 For ever live. When thou tak'st mace and arrow,  
 And scimitar, thy warriors are awe-struck  
 At thy commanding height and royal Grace,  
 While other archers' hands lose all their strength."

The Sháh said : " 'Tis of God. If He withdraw it  
 What strength hath then Bahrám ? "

He urged Shabdíz,

And, nearing a buck onager, let fly  
 His arrow, when the moment came, and skewered  
 Together chest and buttock. As it died

The nobles of the golden belt came up ;  
 They marvelled at his shot, and all applauded.  
 They could not see the arrow's point and feathers,  
 For they were hidden in the onager.  
 The warlike cavaliers and soldiers bent  
 With faces to the ground before Bahrám,  
 What while a paladin exclaimed : " O king !  
 Ne'er may thine eye behold the ill of fortune.  
 Thou art a horseman but all we ride asses,  
 And are but ill at that ! "

The Sháh replied :—

" Not mine the arrow, for the All-conqueror  
 Assisteth me. None in the world is viler  
 Than one whose prop and helper God is not."

He urged his charger onward, thou hadst said :—  
 " Yon courser is an eagle in its flight ! "  
 A gallant onager appeared. Forthwith  
 The Lion reached out for his scimitar,  
 And with a sword-stroke clave the beast asunder  
 In equal halves. Chiefs, nobles, and attendants  
 Armed with the scimitar, came up to him,  
 And, when they saw that stroke, a sage exclaimed :—  
 " What swordsmanship and might are here ! Oh ! may  
 The evil eye ne'er look upon this Sháh.  
 He hath no semblance save the moon in heaven,<sup>1</sup>  
 Beneath him are the heads of this world's chiefs,  
 While heaven is lower than his scimitar,  
 And arrow-point."

The troops that followed him  
 Cleared all the plain of onager. He bade  
 Make rings of gold and grave his name thereon.  
 He ringed the creatures' ears and let them go ;  
 Six hundred too he branded in a batch,  
 Then freed them for the honour of his name,  
 And for his will and pleasure, while a man

<sup>1</sup> " il ne laissera peut-être pas la lune dans le ciel." Mohl.

Went round the host proclaiming thus : “ Let none  
Sell to the merchants any onagers  
On this broad plain but give them as a gift.”

They brought him from Barkúh and from the chiefs  
Of Jaz abundance of brocade and furs.

- C. 1540
- These he accepted and then bade remit  
Those countries’ tax and toll though both could pay.  
Their poor and those that earned their bread grew rich  
By reason of his bounty. Many too  
Had thrones and crowns. He went home from the  
chase,  
And passed a week in mirth among his men.  
It was his wont to hold an open court  
Upon the riding-ground, and thither used  
To fare the troops, the men of eloquence,  
The wise, the needy, and the suppliants.  
“ O ye that seek your rights ! ” he used to say,  
“ Take shelter from your enemies with God,  
While ye that have not slept through toil for me,  
And yet have had no portion of my wealth,  
Come to the king upon the riding-ground,  
And haply he will make your fortunes new.  
If any one is old, past work, and weak,  
Or, being young, is crippled by disease ;  
If any of the people be in debt,  
And worried by the stress of creditors ;  
If any children are left fatherless,  
And yet ask not of those possessed of wealth ;  
Or if the children’s mothers are in want  
In secret and conceal their poverty ;  
Or if, again, a wealthy man hath died,  
And left behind young children in this land,  
Whom an executor, devoid of fear  
And reverence for God, is plundering,  
Keep nothing of this kind concealed from me ;  
I want not people that conceal their wants.

I will enrich the poor, I will restore  
 The souls of misbelievers to the Faith ;  
 I will defray the debts of those who have  
 No money and whose hearts are sad, and open  
 My treasury's door to modest indigence.  
 If wrong befall from officers of mine  
 Defrauding children that have lost their sires,  
 Those doers of injustice will I gibbet  
 Alive for wronging one of noble race."

The Sháh, advanced in wisdom and glad-hearted,  
 Went from the hunting-field toward Baghdád,<sup>1</sup>  
 And to his presence came the haughty chiefs,  
 Both alien and those akin to him.

He bade his retinue disperse and sought  
 His own delightsome palace. They adorned  
 The bower of Barzín, the handmaids there  
 Were clamorous for musk and wine, the Idols  
 Got ready song and harp, the hall was cleared  
 Of strangers. What with harp and wine and pipe,  
 And sound of song, the vaulted heaven seemed  
 To greet the air. All night from every chamber  
 They brought forth bands of dancers that the Sháh  
 Might be not sad of heart. He spent two weeks  
 In mirth, and oped his treasury day and night,  
 Gave largess, and departed for Istakhr,  
 Placed on his head the glorious, royal crown,  
 Unlocked the bower of Kharrád, and furnished  
 The Idols there with treasure and with drachms.  
 If any in that golden women's house  
 Had not a crown aloft an ivory throne  
 The monarch of Frán growled mightily,  
 Bit at Rúzbih his lip in indignation,  
 And said : "The tribute from Khazar and Rúm  
 I give, when paid, to these, but for the nonce  
 Now requisition ass-loads of dínárs,

C. 1541

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 254.

And treasure-loads from Ispahán and Rai.

A women's house when in such case as this  
Will grow all desolate and not befit  
The fortunes of the monarch of Írán.”

They spread brocade upon the floor, and caused  
Fresh tribute to be paid in every land.  
The world thus passed awhile an easy life—  
No war, no toil, no conflict, and no strife.

### § 19

*How the Khán of Chín led forth a Host to war with Bahrám,  
and how the Iránians asked Quarter of the Khán and  
submitted to him*

Anon news came to Hind, Rúm, Turkistán,  
Chín, and all parts inhabited : “ The heart  
Of Sháh Bahrám is given up to sport,  
He taketh no account of any one,  
He hath no outposts, no men are on guard,  
And on the marches are no paladins.  
For love of sport he suffereth all to drift,  
And knoweth nothing of the world's affairs.”

Now when the Khán of Chín heard this he levied  
Troops from Khutan and Chín, paid them, and set  
His face toward Írán. No one took thought  
About Bahrám while Cæsar for his part  
Marched forth in force from Rúm. When tidings  
reached

Írán from Rúm and Hind, from Chín and all  
The settled regions : “ Cæsar hath assembled  
And led an army forth while troops are seen  
Advancing from Khutan and Chín,” the chieftains,  
The warriors old and young within Írán,  
All came before Bahrám Gúr, full of wrath,  
Of rage, and bitterness, and bluntly said :—

“Thy glorious fortune hath displayed its back.  
The heads of kings should be intent on fighting,  
But thy heart is intent on sport and feasting ;  
The crown and throne are worthless in thine eyes,  
So are Írán, the treasure, and the host.”

The Sháh, the ruler of the world, thus answered  
Those archimages, his admonishers :—

“My helper is the Master of the world,  
One who is wiser than the wisest sages.  
I by the conquering virtue of great kings  
Will guard Írán against the claws of Wolves ;  
By fortune, host, wealth, scimitar will I  
Avert this pain and travail from the realm.”

He toyed on just the same, his nobles’ eyes  
Were full of blood through him, and all folk said :—  
“This Sháh will alienate all good men’s hearts.”

Yet Sháh Bahrám’s heart was awake and full  
Of trouble at the tidings. Secretly  
He organised the host while folk at large  
Knew not his privy purpose. All Írán  
Was in dismay at what they saw of him  
Their hearts were riven by anxiety ;  
They all were in despair about the king,  
And held his rule and person in contempt.

Now when the Khán was drawing nigh Írán  
News of him reached the monarch of the brave,  
Who called to him the aspiring Gustaham,  
And spake much of the Khán and of his host.  
This Gustaham was paladin in chief,  
And minister, and fight came as a feast  
To him. The Sháh called Mihr Píruz withal,  
Son of Bihzád, he called too Mihr Barzín,  
Son of Kharrád, Bahrám, son of Píruz,  
Son of Bahrám, Ruhhám and Kharzarwán,  
Which twain were of Sásánian lineage,  
One king of Rai, and of Gilán the other,

C. 1542

Who stood up stoutly on the day of battle,  
 With Rád, son of Barzín, approved in fight,  
 Who was the ruler of Zábulistán,  
 Káran too and Burzmihr and Dád the grim,  
 Son of Barzín, while of the Íránians  
 He chose him out a hundred thousand men,  
 Men of discretion, well beseen in war,  
 Committing to a scion of the race  
 In power—Narsí, the brother of the Sháh  
 So pure of Faith—those cavaliers and throne  
 And crown that he might guard the treasury  
 And realm. Narsí, that man of noble mien,  
 Possessed of Grace and Faith and loving looks,  
 Took up the charge, and thereupon the Sháh  
 Chose from the host twelve thousand cavaliers  
 Fit for the day of battle—veterans  
 With ox-head maces and in coats of mail—  
 And marched thence to Ázar Ábadagán ;  
 But, as he took from Párs so small a host,  
 The mighty and the common folk alike  
 Thought : “ Sháh Bahrám is fleeing from the fight,  
 And making off toward Ázargashasp.”

What time Bahrám set face toward the Fire  
 From Cæsar came an envoy swift as wind.

C. 1543 Narsí received and lodged him fittingly  
 Within the palace.

Now the host approached  
 The high priest to get knowledge of Bahrám,  
 And said : “ Why scattereth he his treasures thus  
 Instead of heaping them like other Sháhs ?  
 He squandereth gold everywhere because  
 He knoweth not its worth. Both citizens  
 And soldiers are dispersed, and all have sought  
 Some course of betterment.”

At length, when words  
 Had waxen old, all folk agreed to send

A man of reputation to the Khán  
 Of Chín, "Because," said they, "ere evils come  
 With war and pillage we must try all means  
 To save Irán : the master of the house  
 Is lost."

Narsí replied : "This is not well ;  
 The world hath not a bed for such a stream.  
 Shall I ask quarter of the king of Chín ?  
 I will clothe earth with men and elephants.  
 There are arms, treasure, and courageous men,  
 Whose swords would send dust out of fire itself.  
 Why this despair concerning Sháh Bahrám  
 Because he started with a little band ?  
 Why have your thoughts turned evil thus ? If ye  
 Think ill then ill will come."

The Iránians heard,  
 And answered him perversely, saying : "Bahrám,  
 Departing hence, took not a host with him,  
 And must we not resign our hearts to grief,  
 For when the Khán shall come to fight Irán  
 Our land will lose both scent and hue ? The foe  
 Will trample on us shamefully, Narsí  
 And all the host will be o'erthrown. All means  
 Will we endeavour to maintain our place  
 And standing here."

There was an archimage,  
 A skilful, learnéd, single-hearted man,  
 Humái by name, and him the Iránians chose  
 To gird his loins and undertake their cause,  
 Then wrote the Khán upon their own behalf  
 A cringing letter which began : "Thy slaves  
 Are we and bow down to thy will and pleasure.  
 We send thee of the produce of Irán  
 Together with our homage and excuses,  
 With gifts too, toll and tribute, for we have  
 No power to stand against the king in war."

So from Frán the blest Humái arrived  
 With certain nobles—men of honest counsels—  
 And gave the Khán the message of the chiefs,  
 Whereat his heart rejoiced. Humái withal  
 Spake of the swift remove of Sháh Bahrám,  
 And of his hasty flight without a host,  
 Before the noble Khán whose heart and soul  
 Expanded like a rose. He told the Turkmans :—  
 “ Now we have saddled the revolving sky !  
 Who ever took Frán without a fight  
 As we have by our counsel, wit, and patience ? ”

C. 1544

He gave great presents to the messenger,  
 Drachms and no few dínárs, and wrote this answer :—  
 “ May wisdom company the pure of soul.  
 I do agree to what hath been proposed  
 By this ambassador of honest men.  
 When with my host I reach Marv I will make  
 The clime like pheasant’s plumes,<sup>1</sup> and streams run  
 milk <sup>2</sup>

By justice, prudence, and magnificence.  
 I will await the tribute from Irán—  
 The Lions’ gifts and taxes. I shall come  
 To Marv, or rather I shall pass it by,  
 Not wishing to cause damage by my troops.”

The messenger returned in haste and told  
 His converse with the Khán who led his host  
 To Marv, the world was black with horsemen’s dust.  
 When he had rested he concerned himself  
 With feasting ; no one thought about Bahrám.  
 At Marv there was no rest or sleep for sound  
 Of harp and lyre, the troops were all abroad.  
 There was no watch, no prospect of a shock,  
 But all was sport, wine, parties, twang of lyre,  
 And feeling night and day secure from war.

<sup>1</sup> Because “ tadarv,” pheasant, rhymes with “ Marv.”

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P. and T.

The Khán was looking for the Írániāns' tribute,  
Wroth that it came so late. Bahrám for his part  
Slept not but guarded well his host from foes,  
Kept his spies busy both by night and day,  
And threw in feast and wine no time away.

## § 20

*How Bahrám attacked the Host of the Khán and took him*

As soon as tidings came to Sháh Bahrám :—

“The Khán and his great host are all at Marv,”

He led his soldiers from Ázargashasp,

Each with two horses but no baggage-train.

With Rúman helmet, morion, and cuirass

He hurried on like wind by day and night,

His soldiers rushing like a mountain-stream,

And reached Ámul by way of Ardabíl.

Departing thence he marched on to Gurgán,

Enduring all the chieftains' toil and pain,

And thence came to the city of Nisá;

One from Bisá preceded him as guide.

O'er mount and waterless and wayless tracts,

C. 1545

At times unwonted, through the night till morn,

He marched and had the watch out night and day.

Thus swifter than a pheasant<sup>1</sup> in its flight

He drew toward Marv. A runner from his scouts

Arrived and told : “The Khán attendeth not

To state-affairs but followeth the chase

At Kashmíhan with wicked Áhriman

As minister.”

Bahrám rejoiced to hear it ;  
His travail seemed but wind. There for a day  
He rested and, when steed and Sháh and troops

<sup>1</sup> See p. 88, note.

Were all refreshed, reached Kashmíhan. At dawn,  
 What time the Lustre of the world arose  
 Above the hills, all ears were filled with blast  
 Of trumpet and all eyes with glint of flag-tops,  
 The din of battle went up from the chase,  
 And filled the ears of Sháh and troops. The clamour  
 Split mighty lions' ears. Thou wouldest have said :—  
 “The clouds are hailing,” wouldest have said : “The  
 moon  
 Is raining blood,” so sanguine was the dust  
 Upon that battlefield ! The Khán, aroused  
 And dazed, was ta'en by Khazarwán. Withal  
 Three hundred of the noblemen of Chín  
 Were captured and fast bound on saddle-back.  
 The Sháh advanced on Marv from Kashmíhan,  
 Thin as a reed with riding for so long.  
 The few of Chín that yet remained at Marv  
 They slew. He followed up the fugitives  
 For thirty leagues ; behind him was Káran  
 Of Párs. Returning to the hunting-ground  
 He gave the booty to the troops. When thus  
 He raised his head in triumph over Chín  
 He recognised in all the power of God,  
 Who to his other good had given the boon  
 Of night, and is the Lord of sun and moon.

## § 21

*How Bahrám took a Pledge from the Túrániens, how he set up  
 a Pillar to delimit the Realm, and placed Shahra upon the  
 Throne of Túrán*

Bahrám Gúr stayed to rest at Marv and when  
 Both Sháh and war-steed were refreshed he chose  
 Bukhárâ for the next attack, for he

Had changed from gentleness to bitterness.  
 He reached Ámwí<sup>1</sup> in one day and one night,  
 Intent on conquest not on chase and sport.  
 He reached it in the night's first watch and crossed      C. 1546  
 The river<sup>2</sup> and the desert of Farab.  
 Whenas the air was golden with the sun,  
 And doffed its skirt of lapis-lazuli,  
 The world was like a falcon's wing with dust  
 What time the world-lord passed by Máí and Margh.  
 He smote the Turkman host and set on fire  
 Their fields and fells, the stars concealed themselves  
 Behind the moon's skirts while the fathers made  
 Their way across the bodies of their sons.  
 All of the Turkmans that were leading men,  
 Both veteran and youthful swordsmen, came  
 Afoot in evil case before Bahrám,  
 With full hearts abjectly, and said : " O Sháh !  
 O mighty one ! O favourite of the stars !  
 O chief of all the nobles of the world !  
 Since now the Khán is captive that broke faith  
 Shed not the blood of those that did no wrong,  
 For tyranny becometh not the great.  
 If thou demandest tribute it is well,  
 But why behead the guiltless ? All of us,  
 Both men and women, are thy slaves and are  
 Thy vanquished in the fight."

The Sháh's heart burned  
 For them. He sewed up with the hand of wisdom  
 The eye of his displeasure. In concern  
 That man of God restrained his warriors' hands  
 From shedding blood. His favour thus secured,  
 The man of wrath appeased, the leading chiefs  
 Agreed to pay a heavy tribute yearly.  
 The Sháh was well content ; he took the tribute,  
 And further sums in lieu of pillaging.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the modern Charjui.

<sup>2</sup> The Oxus.

He turned and reached the city of Farab,  
 His cheeks were flushed and smiles were on his lips.  
 He paused, allowed his troops to rest a week,  
 And called to him the potentates of Chín.  
 He reared a column of cement and stone,  
 Which none, save by the Sháh's command, might pass  
 Out of Irán, Khalaj, and Turkistán.  
 He made the line between them the Jíhún.  
 There was among the troops one Shahra hight,  
 A man of wisdom, rank, success, and fame.  
 Bahrám made him the ruler of Túrán,  
 And made his throne the crown upon the moon.  
 When Shahra sat upon the silver throne  
 He girt his loins and opened wide his hands,  
 Set too the golden crown upon his head,  
 And through the land joy universal spread.

## § 22

*How Bahrám wrote to announce his Victory to his  
 Brother Narsí and returned to Irán*

C. 1547

The business of Túrán achieved, and when  
 The Sháh's heart was released from care, he bade  
 A scribe attend him, called for pen and ink  
 And silk of Chín, and wrote Narsí a letter  
 About the Turkman war and what his troops  
 Had done. It thus began : “The nobles praise  
 Through me—a slave—the Maker of the world—  
 The Lord of victory and mastery,  
 The Lord of Saturn, Mars, and Moon, the Lord  
 Of lofty, circling heaven, the Lord of mean  
 And miserable dust. The great and lowly  
 Are underneath His governance, and all  
 That is to be is subject to His word.

I have indited from the coasts of Chín  
 A letter to my brother in Frán,  
 And this same letter, writ on painted silk,  
 Is meant too for our chiefs and folk at large.  
 Those that were not engaged against the Khán  
 Must hear the tale from us who fought with him.  
 His army was so vast that thou hadst said :—  
 ‘The dust thereof hath smeared the sky with pitch !’  
 The coasts became as ’twere a sea of blood,  
 The unjust’s fortune drooped, and he was taken  
 Because <sup>1</sup> the turning sky was weary of him.  
 Now have I brought him on a camel bound,  
 With wounded liver and with blood-filled eyes.  
 The necks of all the proud are bent, their tongues  
 Are gentle, and their hearts are hot within them.  
 Those now pay tribute who were enemies,  
 And they that erred have come back to the way.  
 I and my host, as my well-wishers would,  
 Will follow this dispatch.”

The wind-foot camels,  
 Foam-scattering, parted like a thunder-clap,  
 And when the letter reached Narsí the heart  
 Of that prince throbbed with joy. The high priest  
 came  
 With all the heroes of the royal race  
 Before Narsí, the palace rang with joy,  
 And all gave ear to that report. The nobles  
 Were pricked at heart for shame before the Sháh  
 By reason of their fault. Among the chiefs  
 Six score and ten and more went to Narsí  
 To proffer their excuses, saying thus :—  
 “Perverse suggestions and the Dív’s behest  
 Have led us to transgress the World-lord’s way.  
 To such a host as that one would presume  
 That God would ope Heaven’s gate. ’Tis marvellous,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

C. 1548

Surpassing thought and all the providence  
 Of wise and learnéd men ! In thy reply,  
 'Mongst matters fair and foul, vouchsafe to give  
 A place to our excuse. Although the chiefs  
 Have erred the illustrious Sháh may pardon them."

Narsí agreed and said : " So will I do  
 As to release the Sháh's heart from revenge."

He wrote at once an answer to the letter,  
 Disclosing matters fair and foul, and said :—  
 " The Iránians in their pain and misery,  
 And for the sake of country, children, treasure,  
 Went for protection to the Khán of Chín,  
 Despairing of their own illustrious Sháh ;  
 'Twas not through enmity, offence, or strife ;  
 No other Sháh had gained their preference.  
 Now if the conqueror, the king of kings,  
 Will pardon he will make their dark night day.  
 Me they selected as the advocate  
 To urge their cause, and bade me : ' Plead for us.' "

An archimage, by name Burzmihr, agreed  
 To go upon that embassage, approached  
 The monarch of the world, and told him all.  
 The Sháh was well contented by the words,  
 The fire of his fierce anger ceased to fume.  
 Then from Chaghán, Khatlán, Balkh, and Bukhárá  
 The chieftains went with tribute, and the archmages  
 From the Gharchís with sacred twigs, and pleaded  
 Before the worshippers of Fire, and thus  
 From year to year all those that had the means  
 Went to the court with taxes and with tribute.

When the Fire-fane was ready and the place  
 To hold the feasts of New Year and of Sada  
 The Sháh approached Ázar Ábádagán,  
 He and his nobles and his men of name ;  
 They went to make their prayers before the Fire,  
 And all the archmages offered reverence.

The Sháh gave largess to the worshippers,  
 And passing thence proceeded to Istakhr,  
 Which was the glory of the king of kings.  
 From ox-hides and from sheep-skins, borne before him  
 Upon the backs of elephants, were scattered  
 A thousand quintals and eight score of largess ;  
 Part was in drachms, the rest in gold dínárs—  
 Coin that an archimage of Párs would call  
 In ancient Persian “ paidáwasí.”<sup>1</sup> Then  
 He brought his scented leather bags of coin,  
 And lavished gold and silver. If he saw  
 Upon a journey any broken bridge,  
 Or heard of any hostelry in ruins  
 From his officials, he would give command  
 For their repair out of his treasury  
 Without forced labour. On the poor withal,  
 And those that toiled to earn their daily bread,  
 He lavished drachms, for bounty never irked him,  
 While, thirdly, on the honest folk, the widows,  
 And infant orphelins, he showered silver.  
 Fourthly, on those too old for work or warfare,  
 And, fifthly, on all those of noble birth  
 That were despised by wealthy folk, and sixthly  
 On folk that coming from a lengthy journey  
 Paraded not their poverty, he lavished  
 A treasure, and looked round him to do good.  
 All booty he made over to his troops,  
 And had no notion of amassing wealth.  
 He bade a pious archimage to bring him  
 The crown worn by the Khán of Chín. They took  
 The jewels out and used them and the gold  
 To grace a Fire-fane’s walls and decorate  
 The throne-top of Ázar. Thence he departed  
 To Taisafún where dwelt Narsí with those  
 Archmages that advised him. All the chiefs,

C. 1549

<sup>1</sup> The “ paidáwasí ” was a silver coin = to five dínárs.

The great men of Irán, and governors,  
 Came forth to meet the Sháh, and when Narsi  
 Beheld that royal head and crown, the flags  
 Resplendent, and that mighty host, he lighted,  
 With all the great men and august archmages,  
 And did obeisance to Bahrám who bade him  
 To mount again, and grasped him by the hand,  
 Then went up to the golden throne and sat  
 What while the chiefs stood girded in his presence.  
 He lavished treasure on the indigent,  
 They opened wide the prison's narrow doors,  
 The age was filled with jollity and justice,  
 The hearts of all were strangers to distress.  
 He banished toil and grief from every clime,  
 He made a banquet for the great, and all  
 That hasted to attend the royal board  
 Received a present worthy of a lord.

### § 23

#### *How Bahrám wrote a Letter of Directions to his Officials*

The third day at a feast made for the nobles  
 A scribe was brought and set before the Sháh,  
 Who, when his visage was relaxed with wine,  
 Wrote, joying in his lovingkindliness,  
 A letter which began with praise of one  
 That hath with knowledge laved his soul, made  
 wisdom  
 The jewel of his heart, won opulence  
 By his own toil and hardihood, acknowledged  
 That all good is from God, hath sought for wisdom,  
 Made friends of sages, knoweth that from justice  
 Naught will proceed but good, and knocketh not  
 Upon the portal of malignity :—

“ If one complaineth of mine officers,  
 My noble chieftains or my men of war,  
 They have no prospect but the cell or gibbet,  
 And, if slain, vile committal to the dust.  
 Endeavour to make others’ travail small,  
 Give joy and happiness to mourners’ hearts,  
 Because the world hath stayed, will stay, with none ;  
 Be just and inoffensive, that sufficeth.  
 I am exemplary of what I say,  
 And an incentive to all righteousness,  
 For what a multitude of troops assailed  
 Me and this noble company, while I  
 Departed with a little host, and those  
 Who were mine enemies are now my friends !  
 One noble personage—the Khán of Chín,  
 A world-lord having signet, crown, and throne—  
 I captured, and the Turkmans’ fortunes fell.  
 All-holy God made me victorious,  
 My foemen’s heads have come to dust. Be service  
 My sole employ, mine every thought be right.  
 I will impose no tax for seven years  
 On subject or compeer. I write this letter  
 In our old tongue to chiefs and to officials  
 That they may treat my subjects in accord  
 To righteous precedent and take no thought  
 Of doing wrong. Dispatch to me the names  
 Of those that are in want within your towns,  
 And in their portion have no day of joy,  
 And well will I content them. Furthermore,  
 If there be any men of noble birth,  
 Who can recall to memory better days,  
 Them also with my treasures set past need,  
 And magnify the wise. The folk in debt,  
 And empty-handed, who are everywhere  
 Looked down upon and scorned, them too relieve  
 Of debt and write their names upon the roll.

Pray ye to God to keep our heart thus true  
 To custom and the Faith, joy in this precept,  
 And well entreat the underlings. Moreover,  
 Despise not your own slaves, for they, like you,  
 Are God's. Let one of wealth, and fit therefor,  
 Entrust to learnéd men his children. Make  
 Their spirits rich in knowledge and encrown  
 Their heads with wisdom. Keep your hands afar  
 From others' wealth, be ye without offence,  
 And worshippers of God. Be diligent,  
 Break not our fealty,<sup>1</sup> and eradicate  
 The stumps, the suckers, and the roots of evil.

C. 155:

Seek not to do your neighbours injury,  
 Especially the magnates and the rich :  
 Make God your refuge, keep His ordinance,  
 And your souls pledges of your love for Him.  
 Whoever hath grown great from nothingness,  
 And raised himself to independency,  
 Call him not great, such greatness dwindleth soon.  
 Be just, be worshippers of God, and wash  
 Perverseness and injustice from your hands.  
 All ye that have ! withhold not from the poor ;  
 Incline to holiness and act aright ;  
 Break not the hearts and backs of suppliants ;  
 Mishap is nigh to all things done amiss.  
 God's favour be upon the soul of him  
 To whom humanity is warp and woof."

When they had written thus on lustrous silk  
 The scribe dipped into musk his pen and wrote  
 The heading thus : "The monarch of the world,  
 The heart of justice, knowing good and ill,  
 The lord of pardon, Grace, and puissance,  
 Bahrám Gúr, the all-bounteous king of kings,  
 To his marchlords and those beneath his rule—  
 The wise and understanding, warlike chiefs."

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Then runners, cavaliers, and cameleers  
 Went with the letter everywhere with guides,  
 And when it came to all the provinces,  
 To every nobleman and chief, all said :—  
 “Thanks be to God, the world-lord is devout.”

Thereat the women, men, and children went  
 In all lands from their houses to the plain,  
 And all invoked a blessing silently  
 Upon that upright monarch of the world,  
 Then set themselves to feast and called for wine,  
 And harp and minstrelsy. They feasted half  
 The day, the other half they toiled.

## At springtide

It was proclaimed before the court at dawn :—  
 “Let those of substance eat and give away.  
 Let them thank us for that which they enjoy,  
 And let the poor come to the treasury,  
 And carry thence five drachms of proper weight,  
 Together with three mans<sup>1</sup> of bright, old wine  
 Hued like pomegranate-blossom or like gold.”

The world disposed itself to merriment,  
 The shouts of revellers filled town and hamlet  
 Until they bought a coronal of roses  
 For two dínárs and gave without complaint  
 A drachm for a narcissus-spike. The old  
 Grew young of heart with joy, the streams ran milk.  
 The Sháh thanked God on seeing all the world  
 Thus glad.

C. 1552

One day he thus addressed Narsí :—  
 “Depart hence with the signet and the crown.  
 I have bestowed upon thee Khurásán ;  
 Cause it to flourish ; joy our subjects’ hearts ;  
 Be nothing if not just ; stint not thy hand  
 Within this Place of Passage.<sup>2</sup> If our father

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 290 note.<sup>2</sup> “n’interromps jamais le passage à travers ce pays.” Mohl.

Sought ill he quaked therefor like naked men  
Beneath an autumn-blast."

He bade prepare  
A robe of honour for Narsí, thus voiding  
An opulent treasury, and said to him :—  
“ God shelter thee, and be the sun’s throne thine.”  
The journey took two se’nnights, then Narsí<sup>1</sup>  
Assumed in peace the rule of Khurásán.

When he had gone one week the Sháh, whose heart  
Was freed from care, bade, and the high priest went  
Before him, bringing certain of the nobles.  
The Sháh addressed him, saying : “ Cæsar’s business  
Is dragging on, and his ambassador  
Is waiting long for his dismissal.  
What sort of man is he, and from the standpoint  
Of wisdom where is he, for wisdom straighteneth  
The soul ? ”

The high priest answered : “ Blest be thou,  
Lord of the world, and dowered with Grace divine.  
He is advanced in years, discreet, and modest,  
A man of goodly speech and gentle voice,  
A pupil of the school of Falátún,<sup>1</sup>  
A man of wisdom, learned, and nobly born.  
He left Rúm, full of energy, but now,  
Since he hath been here, he hath grown depressed,  
And torpid like a snake in winter-time,<sup>2</sup>  
With weak frame and with cheeks of reed-like hue.  
His servitors are all like sheep before  
A hunting cheetah, but regard not us ;  
Such are their manhood and their valiancy  
They think none in this land a man at all.”

Bahrám Gúr answered thus the high priest : “ God  
Bestoweth Grace and diadem and might.  
If He hath given me victory, and turned  
My fortune’s night to day, still Cæsar too

<sup>1</sup> Plato.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “ in the month of Dai.”

Is of imperial race, is great, is sprung  
 From Salm whose head was crowned by Farídún,  
 And can recount his lineage sire by sire.  
 He acteth in a manly, prudent way,  
 And hath not turned to madness like the Khán.  
 At audience we will call the envoy in,  
 To see if what he saith be to the point,  
 And then I will dismiss him graciously,  
 For men are useful to me in this world ;  
 One is for war and bringeth troops, another  
 For feasting and doth bring a golden crown.  
 I must maintain the honour of Írán,  
 The man that treateth with great men is great.”

The high priest praised him lovingly and said :—  
 “ Live happily so long as heaven revolveth.  
 He shall not speak save to exalt thy fame :  
 Mayst thou be chief among the men of name.”

C. 1553

## § 24

*How Bahrám called before him the Envoy of Cæsar, and how the Envoy questioned and answered the Archmages*

The next day when the sun displayed its crown,  
 And rays proceeded from the vaulted sky,  
 The monarch of the world sat on his throne,  
 And called the envoy in before his lords.  
 That old man sage, experienced, eloquent,  
 Of understanding and retentive mind,  
 Approaching with dejected head and arms  
 Enfolded, kneeled before the monarch’s throne.  
 Bahrám both greeted and made much of him,  
 Set him upon the turquoise throne and said :—  
 “ Here thou hast sojourned long ; art thou not weary  
 Of looking on this land ? War with the Khán,

Which closely partnered me, withheld me from thee ;  
 Now all our case is altered, and thy sojourn  
 Exceedeth bounds. To that which thou shalt say  
 We will reply, deriving from thy words  
 Good rede.”

The ancient envoy praised him, saying :—  
 “ May time and earth ne’er lose thee. Every king  
 Possessed of wisdom joyeth in the words  
 Of sages ; sages are more nigh to God ;  
 Those that think evil have the darker day.  
 Midst this world’s chieftains thou art chief, who art  
 At once Sháh, chief, and best. Thy tongue’s a balance,  
 Thy words are jewels, and who e’er will see  
 Gems weighed ’gainst gold ? Thou art possessed of  
 knowledge,  
 Of counsel, sense, and Grace, and all the methods  
 Of conquering kings ; thou art possessed of wisdom  
 And holy rede, and master of the wise.  
 Though Cæsar’s envoy I am thy slave’s slave.  
 I carry Cæsar’s greeting to the Sháh :—  
 ‘ May this head, throne, and crown for ever be.’  
 And furthermore I have it in command  
 To ask seven questions of thy men of lore.”

The Sháh replied : “ Proceed ; the highest honours  
 Await the eloquent.”

He bade the high priest  
 Come to his presence with the famous sages,  
 But sighs were on his lips the while in view  
 Of what the man might ask. “ What are,” he thought,  
 “ The seven mysterious things whereof this Rúman  
 Would question us ? ”

The high priest with the learned,  
 Men mighty in all lore, came, and the spokesman  
 Revealed the secret, telling to the high priest  
 The words of Cæsar : “ What is ‘ the within ’  
 In thy nomenclature, what ‘ the without,’

O guide, who hast no other name therefor ?  
 What is ‘the above,’ my lord, what ‘the beneath’ ?  
 What is ‘the infinite’ and what ‘the vile’ ?  
 What hath most names and ruleth everywhere ? ”

“ Haste not,” the high priest answered thus the sage,  
 “ And turn not from the path of understanding.”

He then proceeded : “ O thou man of wisdom !

Give ear to each reply that I shall make :

There is one answer only to thy words.

As to thy question touching ‘the without,’

And ‘the within,’ it is an easy one :

The heaven is ‘the without,’ air ‘the within’ ;

They are the Glory of the Omnipotent ;

God, touching this world, is ‘the infinite,’

For lore to turn thee from Him is ‘the vile’ ;

‘The above’ is Paradise, Hell ‘the beneath,’

And he is wicked that doth fear not God.

Next as to that with many names whose will

Prevaleth everywhere : O ancient ! wisdom

Hath many names, and wisdom compasseth

The will of kings. One man may call it love,

Another faith, but in its absence all

Is pain and tyranny. The eloquent

Term it uprightness and the fortunate

Astuteness ; ’tis at whiles long-suffering,

At whiles trustworthiness, for speech therewith

Is safe. So divers are the names of wisdom

That they exceed accompt. Allow that naught

Surpasseth it ; it is the chief of goods,

And knoweth this world’s hoarded mysteries,

Which mortal vision cannot penetrate.

Again, the stars that glitter in the sky

Are what the master can afford to slight

For understanding of the Maker’s work.

The eye that gazeth cannot reckon them,

And heaven above is unattainable

As being measureless, so thou mayst scorn  
 Such reckonings and processes of Fate.  
 One that can follow not an arrow's course,  
 Shrewd though he be, will marvel still thereat ;  
 Then what can be more futile, favoured sir !  
 Than to compute heaven's stars ? This much I know,  
 And if another replication be  
 'Tis that the Maker's mysteries are vast."

C. 1555

When Cæsar's spokesman heard he kissed the ground,  
 And offered praise. "World-ruling Sháh," he said,  
 "Ask nothing more of God, for all the world  
 Is thine to bid, the heads of all the great  
 Are under thy control, the world hath not  
 A king like thee in mind, thou praised by all  
 The high-born nobles ! while thy minister  
 In knowledge passeth sage and archimage.  
 All the philosophers are slaves to him,  
 And at his wisdom hang their heads."

Bahrám,

On hearing, showed his pleasure, his heart brightened.  
 He bade a robe of honour be made ready  
 Of things most valued in his treasury,  
 And gave the archimage withal ten purses  
 Of drachms with raiment, steed, and much besides,  
 And then the envoy of illustrious Cæsar  
 Went from the royal presence to his lodging.

When Sol displayed its hand upon the sky  
 The king of kings sat on his golden throne,  
 And Cæsar's envoy came to court, and with him  
 The high priest wise and worshipful. They went  
 With joy before the king of kings, conversing  
 On many matters, and the Sháh's high priest  
 Said to the envoy : "Matchless, peerless sage !  
 What thing is so injurious that we  
 Must weep at its occurrence ? What know'st thou

So useful to the world that men become  
Exalted when it chanceth ? ”

Said the envoy :—

The wise aye will be great and powerful.  
The person of the foolish is more vile  
Than clay and undeserving of all good.  
Thou spakest of the unwise and of the wise,  
And hast received, maybe, the right response.”

The high priest said to him : “ Consider well,  
Reflect, and put not fish upon the dry.”

The envoy said : “ O man approved by all !  
One well may quote the sayings of the wise,  
But, if thou knowest another answer, speak,  
For knowledge giveth increment to fame.”

The high priest answered : “ Think, for speech  
resulteth

From thought and brain, and know thou that the death  
Of one least harmful is the greatest loss  
Of all, but thou mayst joy when bad men die,  
Albeit death is common to us all.

This then is profit and the other loss :  
Let wisdom judge the answer of us both.”

The Rúman gave assent to what he heard ;  
Those words seemed excellent to him ; he smiled,  
Did reverence to the Sháh and said to him :—

“ How happy is the country of Írán !  
For others look not on a king of kings  
Like thee, or on a high priest such as thine.  
Thou art the world’s high crown in understanding,  
In priests thou art the greatest of the great.  
Wouldst thou from Cæsar tribute ? Be it so,  
Because thy minister is sovereign  
In wisdom,” and his words rejoiced the king,  
Whose heart grew fresh as roses in the spring.

C. 1556

## § 25

*How Bahrám dismissed Cæsar's Envoy and charged his own Officials*

The envoy left the presence of the Sháh,  
 The night came on, the Sable Banner rose,  
 The men of lore were weary of discourse,  
 The valiant monarch sought his ladies' bower.

The circling vault of heaven rested not,  
 But roused the sleepers from their drowsihead,  
 The fountain of the sun set up its flag,  
 The world-Sháh's head woke lightly from repose,  
 The chamberlain unlocked the audience-door,  
 The king sat down upon the throne of gold.  
 He bade a robe of honour be made ready,  
 The envoy summoned. Indian scimitars  
 With golden scabbards noble steeds betrapped  
 With gold, dínárs, gems, musk, and spicery,  
 Beyond that ancient man's imaginings,  
 The shrewd Sháh gave the envoy, then was busied  
 With his own folk's affairs. By his command  
 The high priest, who was counsellor withal,  
 Approached him with a noble company,  
 And he apportioned all the land among  
 Those warlike paladins, gave drachms and steeds  
 And signet-rings and casques, and, to the greatest,  
 Thrones, crowns, and provinces. He filled the world  
 With right, and small and great rejoiced in him.  
 He banned the unjust with chilling words, unlargessed,  
 And, after, thus harangued the archimates :—  
 “ Ye sages worshipful and pure of heart !  
 The world for us hath many memories  
 Of doings of the Sháhs unjust and just,  
 Whose hands oft-times were stretched for ill what while  
 Their persons lurked mid ease and luxury.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

The world was frightened by these evil men,  
 The hearts of all the good were rent in twain ;  
 All hands were occupied with evil-doing,  
 And none was instant in the cause of God ;  
 The Dív's work everywhere prevailed ; hearts ceased  
 To fear the Master of the world. The head                   C. 1557  
 Of virtues and the hand of ill, the door  
 Of understanding and the quest of wisdom,  
 Are laid upon the Sháh's neck, and in him  
 Especially are seen both right and wrong.  
 My sire, who stretched his hand out to injustice,  
 Was not a holy man, wise or devout.  
 Hold not his actions strange, for rust attacked  
 The bright steel of his heart. Consider too  
 The experience of Jamshíd and Sháh Káús  
 For having sought the guidance of the Dív.  
 My father in like manner followed them,  
 And washed not his dark soul in wisdom's stream.  
 His subjects writhed, and many lost their lives  
 Through his severity. Now he hath gone,  
 Hath left behind him but an evil name,  
 And hath no praise from any, yet let us  
 Give blessings to his soul, for God forbid  
 That it should writhe through our vindictiveness ;  
 And now that I am seated on his throne  
 His way will doubtless be to Paradise.  
 I ask the world's Lord to bestow upon me,  
 Alike in public and in private, strength  
 To treat my subjects with humanity,  
 And make pure musk out of the darksome dust,  
 That when therewith my body shall conjoin  
 None wronged by me may pluck me by the skirt.  
 Put ye too on the robe of uprightness,  
 With hearts washed clean from wrong, for none is born  
 Unless to die, be he of Persian, Arab,  
 Or Rúman race ; death's charge is lion-like,

And from its claws none can withdraw the neck ;  
 It maketh quarry of the rending lion,  
 The dragon's body 'scapeth not its toils.  
 Where are the heads and crowns of kings of kings ?  
 Where are the mighty and the glorious chiefs ?  
 Where are the cavaliers and haughty ones ?  
 I see no trace of them within the world.  
 Where are its fair who joyed those chieftains' souls ?  
 Know thou that all whose cheeks are 'neath the shroud  
 Are wedded to the dust. Let all of us  
 Have hands both clean and good, and not commit  
 The world to evil ways. I swear by God,  
 The Lord of all, who gave to me the Grace,  
 With crown and throne, high birth and quality,  
 That if an officer of mine shall wrong  
 The mean or mighty by a pinch of dust  
 I will consume his body in the fire,  
 Or hang him to a gibbet by the neck.  
 If in the watches of the night a thief  
 Shall steal a poor man's quilt I will make good  
 His loss from mine own treasury with brocade,  
 And wash the hearts of mourners from their woe ;  
 While if a sheep be taken from the flock  
 In dark night or in snow-storm I will give  
 Instead thereof a steed of noble race,  
 And God forbid that I should ask for thanks.  
 If in a war against mine enemies  
 A cavalier is wounded in the fight  
 I will assign him yearly maintenance,  
 I will not leave his children in distress.  
 Praise ye the Judge that knoweth what is good  
 Throughout eternity. Let none lay hand  
 On water or on fire except the priests  
 That are fire-worshippers. Slay not draught-oxen,  
 For they are of avail in husbandry,  
 Unless past work and worthless to their owner.

Pack-oxen too must not be slain, the land  
 Else will grow void of grace. Deliberate  
 In all things with the men of lore and break not  
 The hearts of children that are fatherless.  
 Be alien from the promptings of the Dív,  
 In fight ensue not feast. If I require  
 My subjects to pay taxes I abjure  
 God, throne, and crown. Since Yazdagird, my father,  
 Did evil, to redress that wrong have I  
 Disseminated justice. Let your hearts  
 All joy to do it and in gratitude  
 Observe the Cult of Fire. God may forgive him,  
 And guide him out of Hell to Paradise.  
 Give pleasure to the young, break not the hearts  
 Of lieges, keep from drunkenness in age,  
 For 'tis unseemly in the old to tope ;  
 Sin ye not therefor, for in age 'tis well  
 To make your preparations to depart.  
 If God, the righteous Judge, approveth us  
 Let not the future trouble you to-day ;  
 Let there be pleasure in my subjects' hearts,  
 And let the nobles' heads be free from grief."

The chiefs, on hearing and considering well  
 His words, all wept that such an one was theirs,  
 A Sháh so wise and shrewd, acclaimed his worth,  
 And hailed him as the great king of the earth.

## § 26

*How Bahrám went with his own Letter to Shangul,  
 King of Hind*

A wise wazír rose to his feet and said :—  
 “ O judge of what is just and right ! the world  
 Hath ceased to fear malignants, toil and stress  
 Have left our coasts. Howbeit famed Shangul

C. 1559

Among the folk of Hind is still perverse ;  
 His bands of plunderers infest the earth  
 From Hindústán up to the coasts of Chín.  
 He will lay hands for ill upon Írán,  
 And thou shouldst apprehend this. Thou art Sháh ;  
 Shangul but wardeth Hind, so why should he  
 Take toll of Sind and Chín ? Consider this,  
 And note his plans, for ill must not ensue.”

The Sháh, on hearing this, was full of thought,  
 The world before him seemed a tangled brake,  
 And thus he answered : “ I will deal herewith  
 In secret, not consulting any one.  
 I will myself alone observe his troops,  
 The conduct of his kingship and his throne,  
 Approaching him an as ambassador,  
 And not acquaint the Írániāns and the lords.  
 O holy archimage ! write to Shangul  
 A firm but courteous letter.”

Thereupon

His pious minister went with a scribe,  
 And others that were indispensable,  
 And canvassed all the case, brought paper, ink,  
 And pen, and wrote a letter full of counsel,  
 Instruction, knowledge, and the praise of God.  
 It thus began : “ From God be praise on those  
 That seek His praise who is the Lord of all  
 That is and is not. All things have their peers,  
 But God is One. Of all that He bestoweth  
 Upon His slaves, on sovereign and subject,  
 Naught is more great than wisdom which illumeth  
 Both. He whom wisdom gladdeneth will walk not  
 The world for ill, and he that chooseth right  
 Ne'er will repent thereof ; he cannot savour  
 Ill from the stream of knowledge. Wisdom looseth  
 Man from mishap ; may none be wrung therewith.  
 Wisdom's first token is that one should dread

Ill-doing all one's years and know oneself ;  
 Then must he search the world with wisdom's eye,  
 For wisdom is the diadem of kings,  
 And jewel of the men of name withal.

Thou know'st not thine own measure but dost plunge  
 Thy soul in blood. Now, seeing that I am  
 The monarch of the age, both good and ill  
 Are laid to me. Do thou so reign that right  
 May be preserved, for ill is manifest  
 On all sides. 'Tis not kingly to make raids,  
 And cotton with the ill-disposed. Thy grandsire  
 Was vassal to us and thy sire a slave  
 Before our Sháhs, and none of us allowed  
 Arrears in tribute out of Hindústán.

Now mark the fortune of the Khán of Chín,  
 Who came thence 'gainst Frán. He gave to spoil  
 All that he brought, and writhed for his ill deeds.

I see thee also thus disposed, the same  
 Perversity, same Glory, and same Faith.

Now I have arms and treasures for the war,  
 My soldiers are devoted and arrayed ;  
 Thou canst not stand against my gallant men,  
 And there is not a general in Hind.

Thou art conceited of thy might, preferring  
 Thine own rill to the river. Now behold !

I have dispatched an envoy to thee, one  
 Of knowledge, eloquence, and high degree.  
 Send tribute or make war and fortify  
 The passes. Be our blessing on his soul  
 Whose warp and woof are equity and wisdom."

Whenas air's breath had made the writing dry  
 The writer of the letter folded it,

And then the scribe addressed it on this wise :—

" From this world's king, the monarch shrewd of wit,  
 The lord of government, the lord of might,  
 The world's possessor, generous Bahrám Gúr,

C. 1560

Who on the day of Ard in month Khurdád  
Received from Yazdagird the royal crown,  
Chief of the marches, guardian of the realm,  
To whom Sakláb and Rúm are tributary,  
This to Shangul, who ruleth over Hind  
From Sind up to the river of Kannúj.”<sup>1</sup>

The monarch sealed the letter with his signet,  
And then made ready for the chase, but none  
Of all the host knew of his purposes  
Except the nobles of his company.  
Thus he drew nigh to Hindústán and crossed  
The river of magician-land.<sup>2</sup> On nearing  
The palace of Shangul he gazed upon  
The hall of audience with its gate and curtain.  
It rose aloft in air, and at the gate  
There was no lack of arms and equipage,  
For there stood cavaliers and elephants  
Amid a din of gongs and Indian bells.  
He stood there all amazed and lost in thought,  
Then on this wise addressed the curtain-keepers,  
The servants and officials of the gate :—  
“ An envoy to this court am I, deputed  
By conquering Sháh Bahrám.”

The chamberlain

Went to the royal presence from the curtain.  
They raised it by the king’s command and brought  
The envoy in with all respect. Bahrám Gúr  
Advanced with stately step, and saw a chamber  
With crystal roof. On drawing near Shangul  
Bahrám beheld him seated on his throne  
Of majesty, and crowned. The steps that led  
Up to that golden throne were all of crystal.  
There sat the king in all his Grace and might,

<sup>1</sup> The Ganges is meant.

<sup>2</sup> Hindústán. Cf. Vol. i. p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> The first five couplets on this page are read, as in P, in the following order : 4, 5, 1, 2, 3.

Arrayed in silver broidered with gold thread  
 Beset with many a gem. Bahrám beheld  
 The monarch's brother on an ante-throne,  
 And wearing on his head a jewelled crown.  
 The minister sat by : the monarch's son  
 Stood there before the throne. The Sháh drew nigh  
 Thereto, did reverence, and paused awhile,  
 Then quickly loosed his tongue. "I have," he said,  
 "A letter written in our tongue on silk,  
 Sent to the king of Hind by Sháh Bahrám—  
 The world's lord who possesseth crown and throne."

The king, on hearing what Bahrám said, bade  
 To bring a golden ante-throne. They set him  
 Upon that seat of gold, and from the gate  
 Called in his comrades. Seated thus he said :—  
 "Exalted king ! I will unloose my lips  
 When thou commandest. May both good and greatness  
 Be ever thine."

Shangul replied : "Proceed,  
 For heaven's blessing is on those who speak."

Bahrám rejoined : "That Sháh of royal race,  
 Whose like no mother in the world hath borne,  
 The exalted prince, the glory of the state,  
 Whose justice turneth bane to antidote,  
 To whom all potentates are tributary,  
 Whose prey is lions in the chase, and who,  
 On taking up the scimitar in fight,  
 Converteth deserts into seas of blood,  
 In generosity like clouds in spring,  
 In whose sight treasures and dínárs are vile,  
 Hath sent the king of Hind an embassy,  
 And letter writ on silk in Pahlaví."

## § 27

*How Shangul received the Letter from Bahrám and made Reply*

The king, on hearing this, asked for the letter,  
 And marvelled at that chief. A noble scribe  
 Read it, whereat the monarch's face became  
 Like gall. He said : " O man of eloquence !  
 Haste not to speak, and act not haughtily.  
 Thy Sháh displayeth his imperiousness,  
 Witness thy journey hither. Should one ask  
 For tribute out of Hindústán the wise  
 Would disavow him. If thy master speaketh  
 Of host and treasure, and of giving land  
 And cities up to woe . . . well, other kings  
 Are cranes, I am an eagle ; they are dust,  
 I am a sea. None fighteth with the stars,  
 Or seeketh fame by warring with the sky.  
 Worth is much better than the useless talk  
 That maketh wise men hold thee in contempt.  
 Ye have not manhood, knowledge, realm or city ;  
 Your share of sovereignty is only loss.  
 My whole land is a hidden treasury  
 Whereon mine ancestors have laid no hand,  
 Beside my store of mail for man and steed,  
 Which, if my treasurer should bring it forth,  
 Would ask for elephants to bear the keys,  
 If mighty elephants could carry them ;  
 And should I count my swords and coats of mail  
 The stars would seem contemptible in sum  
 To thee. The earth will not sustain my host,  
 My throne, and mighty elephants. If thou  
 Shouldst multiply a thousand thousand-fold  
 'Twould be the sum of those that call me king.  
 Mine are the jewels of the hills and seas,  
 I am the present mainstay of the world.

C. 1562

The founts of aloë, musk, and ambergris,  
 The hoards of undried camphor and the drugs  
 That cure the suffering, whoe'er shall ail  
 Throughout the world, are plenteous in my realm,  
 As well as silver, gold, and jewelry,  
 While fourscore kings with crowns of gold up-gird  
 Their loins at my behest. My land is full  
 Of mountain, stream, and chasm ; not e'en a dív  
 Would find his way across it. From Kannúj  
 Up to the marches of Írán and thence  
 Right to Sakláb and Chín the chiefs are all  
 My men and cannot choose but homage me.  
 The watchmen of Khutan, of Hind, and Chín  
 Use in their challenges no name but mine ;  
 All speak the praises of my crown and grow  
 More serviceable. In my women's bower  
 The daughter of Faghfúr of Chín invoketh  
 God's blessing on me—me of all the world.  
 By her I have a lion-hearted son,  
 Whose scimitar despoileth mountains' hearts.  
 No one since Kai Káús and Kai Kubád  
 E'er hath concerned himself about this land.  
 Three hundred thousand warlike troops withal  
 Acclaim me. Of allies I have twelve hundred,  
 Who all are wholly in my confidence ;  
 All are my kith and kin by long descent,  
 And stand before me here in Hind. Their war-cry  
 Would make the lions of the jungle gnaw  
 Their claws. If there were any precedent  
 For chiefs to slay an envoy out of wrath  
 Thy head and body would I part, and let  
 Thy raiment wail for thee.”

Bahrám replied :—

“ As thou art great, O king ! sow not the seed  
 Of wrath. My Sháh said : ‘ Say to him : “ If thou  
 Art wise choose not the pathway of perverseness.” ’

C. 1563

Produce now from thy court two men of lore,  
 Of fluent tongue, and happy in discourse,  
 And if in rede and wisdom they excel  
 One of these men with me then I have done  
 With this thy land, for wise men spurn not words ;  
 Or else choose out among the warriors  
 That wield in Hindústán the massive mace  
 A hundred horsemen to fight one of us,  
 And we, what time thy wit and worth shall stand  
 Revealed, will ask not tribute from thy land.”

### § 28

*How Shangul prepared a Feast for Bahrám, and how  
 Bahrám displayed his Prowess*

Shangul, on hearing this, said to Bahrám :—

“ Thy counsel sorteth not with manliness.  
 Abide a season and relax thyself,  
 Why parley to no purpose ? ”

They made ready  
 A splendid hall. Bahrám reposed till noon,  
 And when the Crown that lighteneth the world  
 Had reached its height the feast was all prepared  
 According to the bidding of the king,  
 And zealous servants were about the hall.  
 When they had spread the board before Shangul  
 He bade a servant : “ Summon to the feast  
 The envoy of the Iránian king, the man  
 Of fluent utterance and novel aims.  
 Bring his companions too and seat them where  
 Ambassadors are placed.”

Bahrám came quickly,  
 Sat at the board and oped his hand to bread,  
 But shut his lips to speech. The eating done,

They set themselves to quaff and called for harpists  
And wine. The scent of musk rose from the feast,  
The hall was spread with golden carpetings.

Now when the lords were merry in their cups,  
And recked not of the future, king Shangul  
Bade two strong men attend, men fit to wrestle  
Against the Div. These noble athletes came,  
And girt their loin-cloths round them. Those two  
youths  
Contended lustily and strained and writhed  
Together. Now Bahrám took up a cup  
Of crystal and the wine confused his brain.  
He spake thus to Shangul : " O king bid me  
To gird me for a bout, for when I wrestle  
Against the strong I am away from harm  
And drunkenness."

C. 1564

Shangul said smiling : " Rise,  
And, if thou shalt o'ercome them, shed their blood."

Bahrám, on hearing this, rose to his feet,  
And boldly bending down the upright form  
Of him whose waist he clutched (a lion so  
Might seize upon wild onager) he flung  
His foeman down so that his bones were broken,  
And all the colour left his cheeks. Shangul  
Was in amazement at the victor's mien,  
His stature and his shoulders and his strength,  
Invoked God in the Indian tongue and deemed  
Bahrám to be a match for forty men.

When they were all bemused with pleasant wine  
They left the hall of jewelled tracery  
And, when the vault of heaven donned musk-hued Silk,  
Both young and old slept after banqueting.  
Shangul went to his sleeping-place, the wine  
Had turned his looks and thoughts from king Bahrám.

Now when the musky-scented Veil was changed  
To gold, and in the sky the sun appeared,

The king of Indians mounted on his steed,  
 And went forth to the Ground with polo-stick  
 In hand. His servants bore his bow and arrows,  
 And for a while he rode to please himself,  
 Then ordered Sháh Bahrám to mount and take  
 His royal bow in hand. Bahrám replied :—  
 “ I have a number of Iránian horsemen  
 With me, O king ! and they are fain to ply  
 The arrow and the polo-stick when bidden  
 By the most noble king.”

Shangul replied :—

“ The arrows and the bow are doubtlessly  
 The mainstays of the cavalier. Do thou,  
 Who hast such limbs and neck and might of hand,  
 String up thy bow and shoot.”

Bahrám Gúr strung  
 His bow and urged his steed with shouts. He took  
 And shot an arrow that destroyed the mark.  
 The sportsmen and the warriors 'gan to call  
 Their blessings down upon him, one and all.

§ 29

*How Shangul suspected Bahrám and kept him from Irán*

Shangul, misdoubting of Bahrám, thought thus :—

“ This stature, Grace, and skill in archery  
 Resemble not a mere ambassador's  
 Of Hindústán, of Turkistán, or Persia,  
 But, be he of the Sháh's race or a noble,  
 'Twere well I call him brother,” smiled and said

C. 1565 Thus to Bahrám : “ Famed, high-born prince ! thou  
 art

No doubt the Sháh's own brother, being dowered  
 With vigour, strength, and skill in archery,

Because the Grace of kings, the might of lions,  
Are thine. Art thou then but a gallant chief ? ”

Bahrám said : “ King of Hind ! discredit not  
Ambassadors. I am not of the seed  
Of Yazdagird or Sháh. To call him brother  
Would be a crime in me. A stranger I,  
Come from Irán, no seeker after knowledge,  
No sage. Dismiss me for the way is long,  
And I must not incur the Sháh’s displeasure.”

Shangul replied : “ Be not importunate,  
For I have somewhat still to say to thee.  
Thou must not be so eager to depart,  
For hasty going prospereth not. Abide  
With us and set thy heart at ease. If thou  
Wilt have not mellowed wine then take it crude.”<sup>1</sup>

He said thereafter to his own adept :—  
“ I have a secret for thee. If this man  
Be not sib to Bahrám, or in degree  
Above his paladins, ’twill prove a marvel  
To wise men’s hearts. We must not trust his words.  
Address him courteously and say : ‘ Abide ;  
There is no cause for thee to leave Kannúj.’  
Sayst thou : ‘ He will detect deceit herein ? ’  
If words of mine may terrify his heart  
It will be better far for thee to speak,  
And talk to him in convenientable terms.  
Say thus to him : ‘ ’Tis well for thee to gain  
More estimation with the king of Hind.  
Now if thou will abide with him, and further  
His subtle policy, thou shalt possess  
The goodliest march of Hind because the king  
Hath thee in high esteem. ’Twill be a land  
Of never ending springtide where the streams  
Breathe of the rose. The fortunate ne’er quit  
Kannúj where twice a year the fruit-trees bear,

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted.

Where there are treasures, gems, dínárs, and drachms,  
 And where drachms can be had hearts are not sad.  
 The king is gracious and for love of thee  
 He smileth when he looketh on thy face.'  
 What time ye meet speak thou whate'er thou knowest  
 To this effect and then inquire his name,  
 For that will joy my heart. Should our land please  
 him  
 Our favours would surpass his excellence,  
 We would appoint him captain of the host  
 Anon, in favour highest in the land."

C. 1566

The king's experienced minister departed,  
 Informed Bahrám, and pointed him his way,  
 Then asked his name because without his name  
 No answer would suffice. Bahrám changed colour,  
 On hearing this, perplexed for his reply.  
 At length he said : " O man of eloquence !  
 Make me not wan of visage in two realms.  
 I will quit not the Sháh for any treasure  
 However much I may be pinched by want.  
 The teachings of our Faith are otherwise,  
 As are our estimations, wonts, and ways,  
 And every one that turneth from his king  
 Is lost by such revolt. No man of wisdom  
 Is eager for addition ; bad and good  
 Are transient with us. Where is Farídún,  
 The master of the crown, he that restored  
 The age ? Where are those chiefs of royal race,  
 The world-lords Kai Khusrau and Kai Kubád ?  
 Thou hast withal some knowledge of Bahrám,  
 The young, ambitious, and imperious,  
 Who, if I cross his purpose, will avail  
 To bring the world in ruins on my head,  
 Leave Hindústán not field or fell but bear  
 Off to Irán the dust of Wizard-land.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 112 and note.

My better plan is to return to court,  
 And to the purview of the conquering Sháh.  
 If thou wouldest have my name it is Barzví ;  
 My monarch and my parents call me so.  
 Communicate mine answer to Shangul,  
 For I have stayed long in an alien realm."

The minister, on hearing this reply,  
 Told all that he had heard before the king,  
 Who frowned and said : " He holdeth him aloof,  
 But I will take such order that this Light  
 Of hosts shall end his days."

There was a wolf<sup>1</sup>

Within the monarch's coasts of bulk so vast  
 That it withstood the wind. The lions fled  
 The woods before it, and the swift-winged vultures  
 The sky. Thereat all Hind was full of fear :  
 Its howlings deafened those most keen of ear.

§ 30

*How Bahrám fought with the Wolf at the Bidding of  
 Shangul and slew it*

Shangul said to Bahrám : " O man approved !  
 All enterprises prosper in thy hands.  
 A wood near by my city troubleth me.  
 There is a wolf there like a crocodile,  
 And rendeth lions' hearts and leopards' hides.  
 Let it be thine to go against this wolf,  
 And pierce its hide all over with thine arrows.  
 The world may find rest then and by thy Grace,  
 Victorious one ! Thenceforth in mine esteem,  
 And that of all this noble company,

C. 1567

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps for " gurg," wolf, we ought to read " karg," rhinoceros. The word is spelt both with g and k in C. and is made to rhyme with " marg," death, and " tagarg," hail. Cf. NIN, p. 55, note.

Thy station shall be such that evermore  
The folk of Hind and Chín all shall acclaim thee."

Bahrám, the honest, said : " I need a guide ;  
Then by God's strength, when I behold the beast,  
Thou shalt perceive its garment <sup>1</sup> soaked in blood."

Shangul provided him a guide that knew  
The creature's lair and haunt, and then Bahrám  
Went with his trusty guide toward the wood  
Of that blood-shedding wolf. Much spake the guide  
About its lair, its height and breadth and bulk,  
Showed where it was and went back while Bahrám  
Approached apace. Iránians thronged behind him  
With loins girt for the fray, but when they saw  
Afar so vast a wood, the monster's bulk,  
And lair that it had made, all said : " O Sháh !  
Adventure not ; thou wilt surpass the bounds  
Of hardihood because, however brave  
Thou art in fight, none hath fought rocks and moun-  
tains.

Say to Shangul : ' This may not be. I have  
No sanction for this combat from the Sháh.  
I fight when I am bidden so that he,  
On hearing of it, may advance my rank.' "

Bahrám replied : " If holy God hath given  
My dust to Hindústán how can I die  
Elsewhere ? That is beyond me."

That brave youth  
Strung up his bow, and thou hadst said : " He holdeth  
His own life cheap ! "

He sped toward the wolf  
With head all rage and heart resigned to death.  
He grasped his royal bow and, having drawn  
Some poplar arrows from his quiver, poured  
His shafts like hail till by that token anguish  
O'ercame the wolf. On seeing the beast's end nigh,

<sup>1</sup> Garment for skin as in Job xli. 13.

Bahrám, exchanging bow for sword, smote off  
 Its head, exclaiming : “ In the name of God,  
 Who hath not mate or peer and gave to me  
 Such Grace and might ! By His command the sun  
 Is bright in heaven.”

He bade bring wain and oxen  
 To carry that wolf’s carcase from the wood.

They bore it. When Shangul saw it afar  
 He had his banquet-hall decked with brocade,  
 And when the mighty king sat on his throne  
 He set Bahrám upon the seat of honour  
 While all the chiefs of Hind, and cavaliers  
 Of Chín, applauded him. The lords all came  
 With offerings and spake thus to Bahrám :—  
 “ None ever did a deed to equal thine ;  
 Its brilliancy is more than eyes can bear.”

As for Shangul he was both glad and grieved,  
 Appearing cheerful and depressed, by turns.

There was a dragon, an amphibious beast,  
 Which haunted streams and sunned itself ashore ;  
 It, with its breath, could suck huge elephants  
 Down,<sup>1</sup> and raise waves upon the dark blue sea.  
 Shangul spake thus to his companions,  
 His clever confidants : “ By turns this envoy,  
 This lion-man, doth please and trouble me.  
 If he remained he would be my support,  
 The ruler of Kannúj and of my realm,  
 But if he goeth from me to Frán  
 Bahrám will devastate Kannúj ; with such  
 A servitor to such a lord this land  
 Will lose both hue and odour. All the night  
 Have I been musing o’er his case and framing  
 A fresh device—to send him to that dragon,  
 Which surely he will ’scape not. Then shall I

C. 1568

<sup>1</sup> “ il enveloppait avec sa queue un éléphant de guerre ” (Mohl).  
*Cf.* Vol. v. p. 233 and note.

Be censured not on his account if he  
Will fight with dragons."

So he called Bahrám,  
Told stories of the mighty men, and said :—  
“ God, Author of the soul, hath led thee hither  
Out of the country of Írán to purge  
The ills of Hindústán as is the way  
Of men of name. A matter fraught with pain  
And travail is confronting us, of travail  
At first but treasure in the end. If thou  
Accomplish this depart on thy return  
With my good wishes home.”

The Sháh replied :—

“ I may not leave the way of thy behests,  
But will perform thy bidding faithfully  
Unless the heaven itself shall turn awry.”

### § 31

#### *How Bahrám slew a Dragon*

Shangul said to Bahrám : “ Within my realm  
There is a dragon—an exceeding bale—  
Which fareth both by land and stream to hunt  
The lashing crocodile. Thou mayst devise  
A scheme to rid thereof the realm of Hind,  
Whose tribute thou shalt carry to Írán,  
For all the country will assent thereto,  
And likewise gifts therefrom of aloe-wood,  
Of swords, and goods of all kinds, with the tribute.”

C. 1569

Bahrám replied : “ Great king and sovereign,  
Whose word is law in Hind ! by God, the Just  
And Holy One’s, command I will cut off  
The footing of the dragon from the earth,  
But must be shown its lair whereof I know not.”

Shangul accordingly dispatched a guide  
 To show it to Bahrám who went his way  
 With thirty horsemen, nobles of Frán  
 And swordsmen. Hasting to the stream he saw  
 The dragon mid the gloom, its form, its writhing,  
 And furiousness, fire flashing from its eyes.  
 The nobles of Frán with loud exclaims,  
 And shrewdly troubled at that dragon, said :—  
 “ Hold not this dragon as thou didst the wolf,  
 O king ! the other day. By one mishap  
 Give not Frán up to the wind, rejoice not  
 Thy foemen here.”

The bold Bahrám replied :—

“ I must entrust my life to all-just God.  
 If I am doomed to perish by this dragon  
 My time will be not lengthened or decreased  
 By hardihood.”

He strung his bow, he chose  
 Shafts dipped in bane of milk,<sup>1</sup> and 'gan to shower them  
 Down on the dragon, wheeling all the while,  
 Like horsemen in the fray, to left and right.  
 He sewed up with steel points the dragon's mouth,  
 Whose venom scorched the brambles, then he shot  
 Four arrows at its head, and blood and poison  
 Poured down its breast. The dragon's body failed  
 By reason of those shafts, and all the ground  
 Ran with its gore and bane. Then lightly drew  
 Bahrám his sword of watered steel and pierced  
 The dragon's heart right dourly, hacked its neck  
 With sword and battle-ax, and flung to earth  
 Its lifeless form. The dragon overthrown,  
 He turned in duty to the Lord and said :—  
 “ O Judge who judgest righteously ! 'tis Thou  
 That slewest this great dragon, for who else

<sup>1</sup> *Corruptio optimi pessima.* We shall have an instance later on, in the reign of Núshirwán, of milk being turned to poisonous uses. See p. 320 seq.

Hath might enough ? Thou art Thy servants' refuge  
From every ill."

He sought the king of Hind,  
The noble chieftain of the Sindian host,  
And said : " The king is freed from these attacks  
By His decree—the Judge and Nourisher's."

Shangul grieved, hearing this, because Bahrám  
Was in the saddle still. He bade that wains  
And oxen should convey the dragon's carcase  
To plain from forest, while all Hindústán  
Invoked upon Írán the All-Just's blessing :—

C. 1570 " For there a cavalier like this was born  
To fight with dragons. One who hath such limbs,  
Such stature and such bearing cannot be  
But equal to the king in his degree."

### § 32

*How Shangul became troubled about Bahrám and  
gave a Daughter to him*

All men rejoiced except Shangul whose heart  
Was pained, the matter made his visage wan,  
And when night came he summoned his wise men,  
Both those of his own kin and aliens,  
And thus he said : " This man of Sháh Bahrám's,  
Who hath such might, such limbs, and mastery,  
Do what I may, is worsted by no toil !  
Now if he goeth from us to Írán,  
And cometh to the monarch of the brave,  
He will deprecate my host and say  
That here in Hindústán there is no horseman,  
And so my foemen may grow insolent.  
I will behead the envoy, will destroy him  
By stealth. What say ye ? What do ye advise ? "

" Bring not thy heart, O king ! " the wise men  
 answered,  
 " To sorrow by such deeds. For thee to slay  
 The ambassadors of kings would be an act  
 Unwise and senseless. No one e'er conceived  
 A thought on this wise. Compass no such plan.  
 Thou wilt be execrated by the chiefs,  
 And people should respect their sovereign.  
 By putting this man's head within the shears  
 Thou wilt bring longsome trouble on thy land.  
 Forthwith will come an army from Frán,  
 And with a potentate like Sháh Bahrám ;  
 None of us in these regions will survive,  
 And thou wilt have to wash thy hands of kingship.  
 This man is our deliverer from the dragon,  
 And slaying should compensate not his toils ;  
 Here hath he killed the dragon and the wolf ;  
 Give him more life, not death."

On hearing this  
 Shangul grew gloomy, for the sages' words  
 Perturbed him. Passing thus the night, at dawn  
 He sent a messenger to Sháh Bahrám,  
 And, when they were together privily  
 Without a minister or counsellor,  
 Said : " O thou Joy of hearts ! thou hast prevailed.  
 Attempt no greater feat. I will bestow  
 My daughter on thee as thy wife, for thus  
 Shall I be profited in word and deed.  
 This done, abide with me, for thou wilt have  
 No colour to depart. I will appoint thee  
 The captain of the host and give thee kingship  
 In Hindústán."

C. 1571

Bahrám was in amaze,  
 And mused upon his throne, his birth, and glory.  
 " There is no remedy for one's own acts,"  
 He thought, " and this thing cannot bring reproach ;

Besides by this I may preserve my life,  
 And look again upon Fránian soil,  
 For, as the case is, we have tarried long ;  
 The lion is taken in the fox's net ! ”

Thus said he to Shangul : “ I will obey  
 Thy hest and make thy word my rule of life.  
 However of thy daughters choose me one,  
 Who, when I see her, may obtain my praise.”

The king of Hind, on hearing this, rejoiced,  
 And decked his halls with painted silk of Chín.  
 Shangul's three daughters came like jocund spring  
 In all their bravery, their scents, their colours,  
 And looks, and then he bade Bahrám Gúr : “ Go,  
 Prepare thy heart to see a novel sight.”

Bahrám Gúr went immediately, beheld  
 The hall, and of those moon-faced maids chose one  
 Like jocund springtide, Sapínúd by name,  
 All grace and modesty, all wit and charm ;  
 On him Shangul bestowed her—one that seemed  
 A straight-stemmed cypress and a smokeless lamp—  
 Then chose the richest of his treasures,  
 Gave to the moon-faced maid the key thereof,  
 Called for Bahrám's companions, cavaliers  
 Of noble rank and masterful, and gave them  
 Dínárs and drachms and every kind of wealth,  
 With camphor, aloe-wood, and ambergris,  
 Steeds, golden trappings, girdles, and for those  
 Of highest rank, gold crowns, while for Bahrám  
 He had a turquoise crown and glorious throne  
 Of ivory prepared, and decked his palace  
 Of jewelled tracery. All men of name  
 Within Kannúj resorted to that place  
 Of feasting, waiting on their king with joy.  
 They spent a se'nnight thus with wine in hand,  
 All glad and jocund in the banquet-hall,  
 With Sapínúd beside Bahrám, the king,  
 Like wine in crystal goblet glittering.

## § 33

*How Faghfúr of Chín wrote to Bahrám and how he replied*

Intelligence came to Faghfúr of Chín :—

“ A man of Grace and courage from Irán  
Hath reached Shangul as an ambassador,  
And verily is of heroic race.

Great exploits have been wrought in Hind and by

The hand too of this valiant lion-man

Through resolution and the might of fortune.

Naught but the crown and throne befitteh him,  
And on him hath Shangul bestowed a daughter,  
So that his diadem might reach the moon.”

That mighty world-lord wrote to Sháh Bahrám

A letter superscribed : “ From him that is

The monarch of the world, the head of nobles,

And crown of chiefs, to that ambassador

Of Persia who with thirty comrades reached

Kannúj,” and then proceeded : “ I have had

Accounts of thee, thou famed and glorious man !

About thy wisdom, prudence, and advice,

And how thou standest steadfast everywhere,

So that the wolf and that notorious dragon

Could 'scape not from thy shafts and scimitar.

The lady given to thee is my kin,

Her dust is worth the whole of Hindústán,

And thou hast raised thy head on high by thus

Affining with this mighty potentate,

While in Irán 'twill magnify the Sháh,

Whose crown well may bediadem the moon,

Because his envoy took fit comrades, reached

Kannúj, and clasped a Moon upon his breast.

Now bear the toil, come hither, and abide

Within this land so long as thou mayst wish.

I will illumine mine eyes with seeing thee,

C. 1572

And make thy rede the breastplate of my soul.  
 Thou shalt go hence at will. I will not bid thee :—  
 ‘ Abide awhile.’ So with a robe of honour,  
 And wealth, depart with joy, thou and thy chiefs,  
 Well furnished. ‘Tis no shame for thee to come  
 To me ; I have no quarrel with the Sháh.  
 On no wise be remiss in coming hither,  
 And, when thou wouldest depart, then tarry not.”

This letter reached Bahrám Gúr and perturbed him.  
 He called a scribe, wrote his reply, and planted  
 A tree within the orchard of revenge.  
 The letter thus began : “ I have received  
 Thy words. Thou canst have seen no land but Chín,  
 For thou hast superscribed thy letter thus :—  
 ‘ From him that is the monarch of the world,  
 The most exalted of the glorious chiefs.’  
 It is not so ; new-fangled majesty  
 Like thine I do not recognise. Bahrám Gúr  
 Alone is king of kings ; we know none other.  
 No man remembereth any king like him  
 In courage, knowledge, Grace, and lineage.  
 Him I acknowledge, as victorious world-lord,  
 And know him greater than all other kings.  
 Again, for what thou saidst about my deeds,  
 And of my toil endured in Hindústán,  
 That too was all the star of Sháh Bahrám,  
 Who hath Grace, throne, and fame. Accomplishment  
 Is the Frániāns’ own, they hold fierce lions  
 Of no account. They all are single-hearted,  
 They worship God, and in their blest estate  
 They fear no ill. Again, if king Shangul  
 Bestowed his daughter on me I achieved  
 That honour by my courage. He is great,  
 By his own courage driveth wolf from sheep,  
 And, thinking good to make affinity  
 With me, bestowed on me his worthy child.

Again, for what thou saidst : ‘ Arise and come,  
 And I will guide thee unto every good,’  
 The Sháh sent me to Hind, and shall I go  
 To Chín for painted silk ? If I propose  
 A course like that he will approve it not.  
 Thou sayest further : ‘ I will send thee home  
 Enriched with treasures.’ God hath set me past  
 The need of clutching after others’ goods.  
 I praise Bahrám for all his bounty to me,  
 And offer up thanksgiving to my God  
 Three watches of the day and of the night.  
 And fourthly, all the praise that thou hast lavished  
 Upon me in excess of my deserts,  
 This I accept from thee, O king of Chín !  
 And will report it to the Sháh. May God  
 Give thee so many blessings that the sky  
 May not distinguish ’twixt their warp and woof.”

Bahrám dispatched this letter to the king  
 Of Chín when he had sealed it with his ring.

### § 34

#### *How Bahrám fled from Hindústán to Irán with the Daughter of Shangul*

When with the daughter of Shangul Bahrám  
 Consorted she found out that he was Sháh ;  
 By night and day she wept for love of him,  
 And kept her eyes upon his face. Her father  
 Heard of her love and ceased to doubt Bahrám.

One day the pair sat happily, discussing  
 Things great and small, and Sháh Bahrám spake thus :—  
 “ I know that thou dost wish me well, so I  
 Will tell to thee a secret ; keep it close.  
 I would quit Hindústán. Dost thou consent

C. 1574

Thereto ? I will take thee withal, but none  
 Among this folk must know. Within Írán  
 My state surpasseth this and, furthermore,  
 The Almighty is mine aid. If thou wilt go  
 Thy wise decision will promote thy weal,  
 In every place thy title shall be 'queen,'  
 And thine own sire shall kneel before thy throne."

She said : " Exalted one ! seek what is good,  
 And turn not from the way of understanding.  
 The best of womankind is she through whom  
 A smile is always on her husband's face.  
 If my pure purposes are not conformed  
 To thy command I joy not in thy life."

Bahrám replied : " Then frame a scheme but tell it  
 To none."

She said : " O worthy of the throne !  
 I will, with fortune's aid. Not much removed  
 There is a place where festivals are held,  
 For in the forest there my father feasteth.  
 It is a place that men deem fortunate,  
 And thither gather idol-worshippers.  
 Hence to the forest is a score of leagues,  
 And one must weep before the idols there.  
 That is a place for hunting onager,  
 A place too for the worshippers of God.  
 Both king and host will set forth to the feast ;  
 He will not leave a soldier in the city.  
 Go then if thou art minded to depart :  
 Let feasts grow old but be thou young for ever.  
 Wait for five days, then when the world's Light shineth,  
 And he shall quit the city, get thee ready  
 To go thyself."

His wife's words pleased Bahrám,  
 Who slept not till the dawn for thought.

Now when  
 The sun displayed its hand upon the sky,

And dark night packed, he mounted on his steed,  
And rode forth with his weapons to the chase.  
He told his wife : " Make ready and tell none ;  
Let us prepare and set out on our way."

Bahrám departed, neared the stream,<sup>1</sup> and saw  
The baggage of some merchants on the road.  
They recognised him, and he bit his lip,  
For they were of Irán—bold travellers  
O'er sea and land. He bade them offer him  
No reverence ; not even had he told  
His comrades what he purposed. To the merchants  
He said : " Shut fast your lips ; on that depend  
Our profit and our loss, for if in Hind  
This secret be divulged the Iránian soil  
Will be as seas of blood. Enlarged is he  
Whose lips are shut, the tongue must be confined,  
And both hands open. By a mighty oath  
Will I bind fast your tongues till I regain  
My throne. Say thus then : ' May we turn away  
From God, the Holy and Supreme, and follow  
The Dív if ever we desert the counsel  
Of Sháh Bahrám and contemplate ill-doing.' "

C. 1575

When this oath had been taken and confirmed,  
So that the Sháh's heart was relieved from care,  
He said : " Guard well my secret, tendering it  
Like life itself, if ye desire to turn  
My bondage <sup>2</sup> to a crown ; but if the throne  
Be void of me armed hosts will come from all sides,  
And leave no merchants here, no Sháh, no thane,  
No host, no throne, no crown."

When they perceived  
The import of his words they came with cheeks  
All wet with weeping. " May the nobles' lives  
Thy ransom be," they said, " and youth and kingship  
Thy habit. If the treasure of thy secret

<sup>1</sup> The Indus, according to Mohl.<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

Should be revealed our country would resemble  
 A sea of gore ! Who dareth contemplate  
 Such things and turn his wisdom to an ax,  
 His counsel to a hatchet ? ”

Hearing this,

The Sháh 'gan praise those honourable men  
 Of Grace and Faith, and fared home ill at ease,  
 Committing to God's charge his soul and body.  
 He tarried till the banquet-hall was decked,  
 And till the nobles had departed thither,  
 But when Shangul himself prepared to go  
 Bahrám's wife said to him : “ Barzwí is sick,  
 Would be excused, and saith : ‘ Be not concerned  
 For me, O king ! The banquet-hall to one  
 That aileth is distasteful, and the king  
 Must know thus much.’ ”

“ Let none,” Shangul replied,  
 “ That aileth think of banqueting.”

At dawn

He left Kannúj and hurried to the place  
 Of feasting. When 'twas night said Sháh Bahrám :—  
 “ 'Tis time to go, good wife ! ”

He seated her

Upon her palfrey and invoked God's name  
 O'er her in ancient Persian, donned his mail,  
 And mounted too, his lasso in the straps,  
 And mace in hand. He hurried to the river,  
 And found the merchants sleeping. Rousing them  
 He gat a skiff in readiness wherein  
 He seated Sapínúd. With day begun  
 They came to land, and brightly shone the sun.

## § 35

*How Shangul followed Bahrám, learned who he was,  
and was reconciled to him*

A horseman from Kannúj sped with the tidings  
Of Sháh Bahrám's departure, and Shangul,  
Who heard it from that loyal servant, quitted  
The chase as swift as fire. He hurried on  
Until he reached the river where he saw  
Both Sapínúd and brave Bahrám. He grieved,  
Crossed o'er in dudgeon, and upbraided thus  
His child : " O wicked wanton ! thou hast passed,  
Bold as a lioness, across the river  
To go Írán-ward with this lusty knave,  
To desert waste from cultured paradise,  
Without my knowledge. Now thou shalt behold,  
Since thou hast left my pillow secretly,  
The impact of my double-headed dart."

Bahrám replied : " O thou of evil mark !  
Why didst thou urge thy steed as madmen do ?  
Thou hast had testimony that in war  
I am as with the cup and boon-companions.  
A hundred thousand men of Hindústán  
Before me would not equal, as thou knowest,  
One horseman like me and my thirty comrades,  
Famed, clad in mail, and wielding Persian swords.  
I will fulfil the Indians' eyes with blood,  
And will not spare a soul."

Shangul was ware

That he had spoken sooth because his prowess  
And valiancy could not be overlooked,  
But answered him : " I have foregone my children,  
My kindred, and allies, have held thee dearer  
Than mine own eyes, and as the diadem  
Upon my head, and given thee her whom thou  
Thyself didst choose. The right is on my side,

O. 1576

The wrong on thine. Instead of good faith thou  
 Hast chosen outrage. Ever hast thou heard  
 Of good faith paid thereby ? Shall I tell thee :—  
 ‘ One of my kin and wise in mine esteem  
 Hath gone off cavalierly, gone conceiving  
 Himself a king ? ’ What hath a Persian’s heart  
 In common with good faith ? He sayeth ‘ yea ’  
 And meaneth ‘ nay ’ ! Thou’rt such a lion’s whelp,  
 In good sooth, as would bathe in their hearts’ blood  
 Its nurses and, when fanged and sharp of claw,  
 Would purpose combat with its fosterer ! ”

Bahrám made answer : “ When thou knowest me  
 How shalt thou call me ill in thought and deed ?  
 I shall be unreproached for having gone,  
 Thou wilt not term my heart and conduct evil.

C. 1577 The king of kings am I both of Írán  
 And of Túrán, the leader of the folk,  
 The mainstay of the brave, and will requite  
 Hereafter thy deservings and behead  
 Thy foes, hold thee as father in Írán,  
 And vex thee not with tribute for thy realm.  
 Thy child shall be the Lustre of the West,  
 And Crown of dames.”

Astounded at his words  
 Shangul took off his Indian turban, spurred  
 His steed, and from the front of that great host  
 Approached the Sháh to make excuse, embraced  
 The king of kings with joy, and sought to amend  
 What had been said. He was rejoiced to see  
 Bahrám, prepared the board, and brought the cup.  
 Bahrám revealed the secret to Shangul,  
 Discoursed of the concernsments of Írán,  
 And said : “ Such circumstances and such thoughts  
 Were those that guided me in this affair.”

They both of them arose, the drinking done,  
 And each asked pardon of the other one.

## § 36

*How Shangul went back to Hind and Bahrám to Irán*

These two kings—one a worshipper of God,  
The other an idolater—joined hands,  
And pledged themselves : “ Henceforth we will not  
sever

Out hearts from right, will raze each root of guile,  
Keep faith for aye, and listen to the words  
From sages’ lips.”

Shangul too bade farewell  
To Sapínúd, he made his breast the warp  
And hers the woof. The two kings quickly turned  
Their backs on one another and flung down  
The rancour of their hearts upon the dust.  
One land-ward went, the other river-ward,  
Apace and glad.

When tidings reached Irán :—

“ The Sháh himself with those escorting him  
Hath come back from Kannúj,” the people all,  
As they were minded, decked the roads and cities,  
And everywhere strewed money, musk, and saffron.  
When Yazdagird received the news he gathered  
The scattered troops. He and Narsí, the high priest,  
And all the sages, went to meet the Sháh.

When Yazdagird beheld his sire Bahrám  
He lighted down and bent him to the dust.

Narsí, the monarch’s brother, and withal  
The high priest had cheeks dust-stained but glad hearts.  
On such wise Sháh Bahrám came to his palace,  
Committing soul and body both to God.

He rested when the world grew dark and while C. 1578  
The moon was like a silvern shield, but when  
Day rent night’s raiment, and the world’s Light  
showed,

The king of kings sat on his golden throne,  
 Gave audience but refrained his lips from speech.  
 Came all the nobles with the men of lore,  
 And princes of the empire, then the world-lord  
 Rose on his throne and spake words just and holy,  
 First spake of the Creator, then discharged  
 His debt <sup>1</sup> to wisdom, and thus said : “ Revere  
 The Almighty in whose ken the manifest  
 And hidden are, Him praise, and unto Him  
 Address thy supplications midst night’s gloom,  
 For he hath given power and victory,  
 And is the Lord of shining sun and moon.  
 All ye that would gain Paradise abstain  
 From evil and foul deeds. Where there is justice  
 With bounteousness and righteousness the heart  
 Will turn from guile and loss. Let none henceforth  
 Fear me though he posseseth hills of gold,  
 And mines of silver. From your hearts expel  
 All fear and seek addition of all good.  
 The peasant and the thane are one to us  
 When we are judge. When we gave crown and  
 throne  
 To any know that ’twas from God and fortune.  
 I will strive not to fill my treasury,  
 I would drive not my people from their homes.  
 One treasure only—justice—will I hoard  
 That after death my spirit may rejoice.  
 Thus too, God willing, will my heart grow bright,  
 And fortune smile. Hereby I shall increase  
 Our blessings and direct you to fair fortune.  
 He who hath borne oppression from my troops,  
 Officials, kin, and cavaliers of war,  
 And doth acquaint me not, but keepeth hidden  
 That knavery, is guilty of the crime ;  
 Will one so futile e’er endeavour greatness ?

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

I call to God for justice on the man  
 That hath concealed the moon behind a cloud ;  
 But if your will is other, for men's motives  
 Are diverse, tell me boldly ; haply I  
 May bring to pass your long-conceived desires.  
 Attend to me, do what I bid, and find  
 Your souls' peace in my counsels."

Thus he spake,

Resumed his seat upon the throne, rejoicing,  
 And set the crown of greatness on his head.  
 The nobles praised him, saying : " May the crown  
 And signet ne'er lack thee. Realm, crown, and thronē C. 1579  
 All glory in a Sháh that is both wise,  
 And of victorious fortune, but with thee  
 Thy hardihood, thy knowledge, and thy Grace  
 Are greater than the throne of king of kings.  
 A Sháh like thee the world remembereth not  
 For manliness, for treasure, and for justice.  
 To bless thee is incumbent on us all,  
 Both young and old, and we will glorify thee  
 To God and in the presence of our folk.  
 No Sháh hath sat upon this throne of gold  
 Like thee in justice, victory, and might.  
 Thou raisest from the dust the dead by justice,  
 By goodly speech, and by munificence.  
 May God almighty be thine aid, and may  
 The head of fortune's star be in thy lap."

The mighty men and sages prosperous  
 Went from the monarch's throne with songs of joy.  
 Then mounting with his troops he drew anear  
 The precincts of Ázargashasp. He lavished  
 His gold and jewels on the mendicants,  
 On those especially that hid their want.  
 The high priest of the Fire-fane of Zarduhshht  
 Came muttering prayers with sacred twigs in hand.  
 The Sháh brought Sapínúd to him, and he

Instructed her in custom, Faith, and rite,  
 In limpid water and the good religion  
 Bathed her and banned from her dust, rust, and soil.<sup>1</sup>  
 The Sháh unlocked the prisons and began  
 Bestowing gifts of drachms on every man.

## § 37

*How Shangul with seven Kings visited Bahrám*

Now from his child—the consort of the Sháh—  
 Shangul heard of the doings of her spouse,  
 And was desirous to behold Frán—  
 The dwelling of the noble monarch's daughter.  
 He sent an Indian eloquent and noble  
 As envoy to request the Sháh to grant  
 Another treaty to be stored away  
 For record, and the world's lord had one drawn  
 Like shining Sol in jocund Paradise.  
 The envoy took withal a letter written  
 In ancient Persian by the Sháh's own hand,  
 And went his way.<sup>2</sup> Now when he reached Shangul,  
 And when the monarch of Kannúj had seen  
 Bahrám Gúr's letter, he prepared to journey  
 From Hindústán, but hid it from his kindred  
 In Chín. Seven monarchs followed in his train,  
 Escorting Rái<sup>3</sup> Shangul upon his way—  
 The monarch of Kábul, the king of Hind,  
 The king of Sind with troops, the famous king  
 Who ruled Sandal, the monarch of Jandal,  
 A potent prince, the monarch of Kashmír,  
 A man of mastery, and last of all  
 The great and glorious monarch of Múltán,

<sup>1</sup> “la débarrassa de la poussière et de la rouille de l'idolâtrie” (Mohl).

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>3</sup> Rái = Rája.

All coveters of honour, all with crowns,  
 All wearing torques and earrings, all with escorts  
 And camp-equipment, all of them renowned,  
 Of high estate and rank, all exquisite  
 With silver, gold, and gems ; their parasols  
 Were all of peacocks' plumes, their elephants  
 Had housings of brocade, their escorts glittered  
 O'er miles with offerings for the Sháh and gifts,  
 Such that dínárs seemed worthless in his eyes.  
 Thus king Shangul and those seven kings withal  
 Proceeded stage by stage, and, when they neared  
 Frán with all their precious equipage,  
 The Sháh, informed of their approach, arrayed  
 A host to go to meet them while the chiefs  
 Of every city went to welcome them.  
 The king of kings in wisdom old, and wary  
 Though young in years, advanced to Nahrawán.  
 The two illustrious and exalted kings  
 Drew near to one another, both of them  
 Alighted from their steeds and, as they met,  
 Both offering greetings and apologies,  
 Embraced. Both retinues alighted too :  
 The world was full of babble. Much talk passed  
 On matters great and small when thus the kings  
 Of these two kingdoms met. They both remounted,  
 As did their worshipful and famous troops.  
 Bahrám Gúr set him up within his halls  
 A golden throne draped as the custom was,  
 Set wine upon the board and furnished minstrels.  
 The whole place rang with song. He spread a board,  
 An arrow-flight in length, with roasted lambs<sup>1</sup>  
 And fowls. The eating done, he held a revel  
 In royal wise—all colour, scent, and beauty.  
 The handmaids and the slave-boys stood around,  
 Throne, hall, and palace were like Paradise,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 238 and note.

The wine-cups were all crystal, there were chargers  
 All golden, musk, and scents. The revellers  
 Wore jewelled crowns and shoes depict with gems.  
 Shangul was in amazement at the palace,  
 And as he drank he pondered : “ Is Frán  
 A paradise or garden where one’s friends  
 Exhale the scent of musk ? ”

Thus to the Sháh

Said he in private : “ Let me see my daughter.”

C. 1581

Bahrám bade eunuchs of the company  
 Conduct him to that Moon. The noble king  
 Went with them and beheld another palace  
 Like spring. When he beheld her on her throne  
 Of ivory, crowned with an amber crown,  
 He came and kissed her on the head, and laid  
 His cheek to hers and wept exceedingly  
 For love of her as did the Fair o’er him.  
 He stroked her hand and speaking of that hall,  
 That palace, and reception-room, he said :—  
 “ Behold a paradise ! Thou hast escaped  
 A wretched palace and a foul abode.”

The gifts that he had brought with him—the  
 purses,

The crowns, and slaves withal, the gems and raiment,  
 Whose value none knew how to estimate,

He gave to her. He gave great largess too,  
 And that blithe home was like a garth in spring.  
 Departing thence he went back to the Sháh,  
 Disposed for drinking by his happiness.

Now when the lords were merry with the wine  
 Shangul departed to his couch to sleep,  
 And, when the Veil of musky hue appeared  
 With stars to spot it like a leopard’s back,  
 The revellers betook them to sweet slumber,  
 While all the attendants stood with folded arms.

Thus was it till that golden Cup appeared,

Which thou wouldst call the sun, flung off the cloak  
 Of lapis-lazuli, and strewed the waste.  
 With topazes ; then valiant Sháh Bahrám  
 Went forth to hunt and took the Indian kings,  
 Went to the chase with cheetahs, hawks, and falcons<sup>1</sup>  
 Imperious. For a while they did not irk  
 Their hearts, not one of them felt pain and grief  
 As for a month they hunted on the waste  
 Gazelle and onager. Then they returned  
 With instancey to wine and festival.  
 Thus king Shangul, when hunting and when feasting,  
 Ne'er was long absent from the world-lord's side,  
 Or at the riding-ground, at merrymake,  
 At banquet and at polo, turned his face  
 For one day from the Sháh. A long while passed,  
 The Indian king prepared to journey home.  
 He sought his daughter with a loving heart,  
 And stayed with her a while. He bade a slave-boy  
 Bring pen and paper to him, then he sought  
 For phrases scented with black, pounded musk,  
 And wrote in Indian a righteous rescript,  
 As it were ancient Persian. First he praised  
 Him who had washed the world of its distress,  
 Had spread abroad integrity and right,  
 And flung black lies and loss upon the Div :—  
 “ I serve upon the way of use and Faith,  
 Not that of anger or for vengeance sake.  
 I have bestowed my daughter Sapínúd  
 As wife on Sháh Bahrám, that noble prince.  
 May he live ever as the king of kings,  
 And be the great ones of the world his slaves.  
 As soon as I shall quit this Wayside Inn  
 Let king Bahrám become Rái of Kannúj.<sup>2</sup>  
 Transgress not the commandment of that king,  
 And carry my dead body to the fire.

C. 1582

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 76, note.<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 140, note.

Give up my treasury to Sháh Bahrám,  
And therewithal crown, kingdom, throne, and casque.”

This deed of gift in Indian characters  
On silk he gave to Sapínúd as hers.

### § 38

*How Shangul returned to Hindústán, and how Bahrám remitted the Property-tax to the Landowners*

Shangul abode for two months in Irán,  
And then dispatched a noble to the Sháh  
To ask permission to depart, both he  
And his illustrious counsellors, for home.  
The king of kings consented that Shangul  
Should start on his return to Hindústán,  
And bade an archimage to choose among  
The treasures of Irán—dínaṛs, gems, silver,  
Gold, thrones and crowns, swords, girdles and brocade,  
And stuffs uncut—unbounded, countless gifts  
To give Shangul while for his suite he furnished,  
To each in his degree, steeds and brocade  
Of Chín, dismissed them happy and content,  
And went three stages with Shangul. Besides  
The gifts he gave them provand to the coasts  
Of Hindústán.

When Sháh Bahrám returned  
He sat in peace upon the throne, but mused  
Of death and of ill fortune till his heart  
Ached and his face grew wan. He bade a scribe—  
A noble archmage who was his vizír—  
To come to him and bade him to inspect  
The treasury and reckon up the gold,  
The gems, and raiment, for astrologers  
Had told him, and the words had troubled him :—

"Thy life will last three score of years, the fourth score  
Will make thee weep at death," and he had said :—

"The first score years will I devote to pleasure,

C. 158.

Will set joy as a shoot within my soul,

And in the next will justify the world

By equity and liberality

In public and in private. I will leave

No corner waste and will provide for all.

In the third score I will entreat the Lord ;

Perchance He will direct me on my way."

The astrologer said sixty years and three,  
But of the three the reckoning was not clear,  
And so the Sháh desired sufficient treasure  
To meet the presage of the astrologer,  
Else would he have not self-reproach and travail ?

The treasurer went to the treasury,  
On hearing this, and laboured at the account.  
He toiled exceedingly till he had told  
The total to the monarch's minister,  
Who thereupon went to the famous Sháh,  
And said : "For three and twenty years to come  
In sooth thou wilt need naught. I have allowed  
For provand, largess, and thy famed troops' pay,  
For envoys that arrive from other kings,  
And from thine own famed provinces, and thou  
Possessest for these years a treasury filled  
With silver, gold, and goods."

On hearing this  
Bahram took thought, he was too wise to sorrow  
Beforehand, and replied : "My sway is ending.  
This world, if thou reflectest, hath three days.  
Since yesterday is over, and to-morrow  
Not come, to-day I stoop not under care.  
As I have means of largess and a throne  
Of ivory I will have no more tax."

He bade that no tax should be asked thenceforth.

From small and great. He set up in each city  
 A man to rouse the drowsy and check strife  
 Wherefrom proceedeth naught save evil deeds.  
 He gave those wise archmages what was needful  
 By way of provand, clothes, and draperies  
 Out of his treasury, and said to them :—  
 “ Ye must hide nothing good and bad from me.  
 Be ye the arbitrators of disputes,  
 Make no demands that make yourselves vexatious,  
 Report both good and ill, and cut my fears  
 Concerning evils short.”

This thing obtained

Throughout the world, and nothing good and bad  
 Remained concealed. Those sages ordered all,  
 But still from every province letters came,  
 Which said : “ Through bounty,<sup>1</sup> idleness,<sup>2</sup> and wealth  
 The brains of men are ceasing to be wise.

C. 1584 There is such strife and bloodshed in the world  
 That young men set no value on the great ;  
 The young men’s hearts are filled with many things,  
 But not with thoughts of Sháh and archimage.  
 Their faces they have turned from gain to guile,  
 They have grown troublesome and combative.  
 The peasants, landowners, and unemployed,  
 All give themselves to battle and contention.”

When letters of this kind arrived the Sháh  
 Was heart-pierced at the bloodshed. In each province  
 He chose officials, wise and understanding  
 As was befitting, and provided them  
 Out of his treasury with food and raiment,  
 The means for largess, and its allocation,  
 And for six months established offices,  
 Requiring of his subjects drachms in payment,  
 And stamping “ tax ” on silver thus received.  
 The officers wore crowns and had great state.

<sup>1</sup> Or, with Mohl, “ les dons du roi.”

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

For six months he received, for six gave back  
 To wretched mendicant and man of birth.  
 He strove in this way to keep men of war  
 From bloodshed and inaugurating ill.

Again his agents wrote : " Munificence  
 Hath robbed the world of its security,  
 For they that have the money pay no tax,  
 But only meditate more bickerings.

Instead of being crass they have grown cruel,  
 They are all troublesome and quarrelsome."

Now when Bahrám Gúr had perused this letter  
 His heart was troubled at such deeds. He bade :—  
 " Treat in accord to God's decree all those  
 That shed blood or employ deceit, that all  
 May find the means of livelihood."

He chose

A marchlord full of justice and of knowledge  
 For every provincee as was fit. He gave them  
 A court-allowance for a year, invoking  
 The Giver of all good. Much time passed by,  
 And then the monarch had a letter sent  
 To those truth-speaking men and correspondents,  
 Whom he had scattered through the world, to ask :—  
 " What is there in the world unprofitable,  
 And bringeth injury upon this realm ? "

They wrote in answer : " Through the monarch's  
 gifts  
 No man observeth rule and precedent.  
 There is no thought or care for tilth or toil  
 Wherefrom man's worth deriveth. We behold  
 Draught-oxen straying and the herbage lush  
 In tilth and springing crop."

The Sháh rejoined :—

" Till midday, when the world-illumining sun  
 Is at its height, the tiller of the soil  
 Must rest not from his work. The other half

O. 1585

Is for repose and sleep. If men are fools  
 We can but weep for them. If any lacketh  
 Fruits, seed, and oxen be not stern and harsh  
 Toward him but kind and aid him from my treasures  
 That none may be distressed by indigence.  
 So likewise if the weather causeth loss,  
 And nobody is sovereign o'er the weather,  
 Or locusts anywhere conceal the earth,  
 And eat the herbage to the naked soil,  
 Give compensation from the treasury.  
 Proclaim this edict in the provinces.  
 If there are sterile routes or if the land  
 Be but a waste and all uncultivate,  
 And whether it be owned by rich or poor,  
 From such as I describe demand not aught,  
 And if a man, one of my servitors,  
 Or mine own foster-sire, shall take one mite  
 Him will I bury on the spot alive :  
 God give him neither home nor dwelling-place.”

They sealed the letter with the royal ring,  
 And sent the camel-posts a-hurrying.

### § 39

#### *How Bahrám summoned Gipsies from Hindústán*

Thereafter he sent letters to each archmage,  
 Gave clothing to the mendicants, and asked :—  
 “ In all the realm what folk are free from toil,  
 And who are mendicants and destitute ?  
 Tell me how things are in the world, and lead  
 My heart upon the pathway toward the light.”

An answer came from all the archimages,  
 From all the nobles, and the men of lore :—  
 “ The face of earth appeareth prosperous,  
 Continuous blessings are in every part,

Save that the poor complain against the ills  
 Of fortune and the Sháh. ‘The rich,’ they say,  
 ‘Wear wreaths of roses in their drinking-bouts,  
 And quaff to minstrelsy, but as for us  
 They do not reckon us as men at all.  
 The empty-handed drinketh with no rose  
 Or harp.’ The king of kings should look to it.”

The Sháh laughed heartily at this report,  
 And sent a camel-post to king Shangul  
 To say thus : “ O thou monarch good at need !  
 Select ten thousand of the Gipsy-tribe,  
 Both male and female, skilful on the harp,  
 And send them to me. I may gain mine end  
 Through that notorious folk.”

C. 1586

Now when the letter  
 Came to Shangul he raised his head in pride  
 O'er Saturn's orbit and made choice of Gipsies,  
 As bidden by the Sháh who, when they came,  
 Accorded them an audience and gave each  
 An ox and ass, for he proposed to make  
 The Gipsies husbandmen, while his officials  
 Gave them a thousand asses' loads of wheat,  
 That they might have the ox and ass for work,  
 Employ the wheat as seed for raising crops,  
 And should besides make music for the poor,  
 And render them the service free of cost.  
 The Gipsies went and ate the wheat and oxen,  
 Then at a year's end came with pallid cheeks.  
 The Sháh said : “ Was it not your task to plough,  
 To sow, and reap ? Your asses yet remain,  
 So load them up, prepare your harps, and stretch  
 The silken chords.”

And so the Gipsies now,  
 According to Bahrám's just ordinance,  
 Live by their wits ; they have for company  
 The dog and wolf, and tramp unceasingly.

## § 40

*How the Time of Bahrám came to an End*

Thus passed he three score years and three, and had  
 No equal in that age. With New Year came  
 The scribe—the wise archmage, his minister—  
 And said to him : “The treasury of the king  
 Of mighty men is void, and I have come  
 For thy command. Those that enjoyed this wealth  
 Expect us not to levy any tax.”

The monarch answered : “Take no further pains,  
 For I have passed beyond the need thereof.  
 Resign the world to its Creator—Him  
 Who manifested forth His works. The heavens  
 Will pass away, but God abideth ever  
 To guide both thee and me to what is good.”

He slept that night, and early in the morn  
 A countless crowd resorted to his court.  
 They brought together all that were required,  
 And young prince Yazdagird approached the Sháh,  
 Who gave him in the presence of the lords  
 The crown and bracelets, torque and ivory throne.  
 Intending to devote himself to God  
 He cast away the crown, he left his seat,  
 And hastened to resign the world’s affairs.  
 At night-fall he was eager for repose,  
 And, when the sun displayed its head above  
 The deep, fear filled his archimage’s heart,  
 Who thought : “The Sháh ariseth not from sleep  
 Unless he hath withdrawn him from the lords.”

C. 1587 Then Yazdagird drew near his sire and spied  
 What froze the breath upon his lips—Bahrám  
 With faded cheeks lay dead on gold brocade !

The day of gloom is as it was of yore,  
 Sear not thy heart with greed and lust of more.

At death the cores of stones and iron quail,  
 And here thy strivings are of no avail.  
 Thou shouldst be inoffensive and humane ;  
 Why seek addition with its biting bane ?  
 Woe for that great Sháh and his equity !  
 Oh ! never derogate his memory.  
 Of fifty monarchs of seed royal sown,  
 Who girt their loins upon the Iránian throne,  
 Bahrám Gúr had no like in eminence,  
 In justice, puissance, and excellency.  
 Thou wouldst have called king Rustam but vizír  
 To him though Rustam sent his arrows sheer  
 Through mounts of iron, yet was theroy no delay  
 When Sháh Bahrám Gúr's term had passed away.  
 What profit had he from his valour's day ?

For forty days the Sháh bewailed his sire,  
 The host wore raiment black and blue, and when  
 The charnel closed o'er that famed warrior Sháh  
 " He bore off bounty," thou hadst said, " with him."  
 Sun, moon, and Venus, Saturn, crown, and throne,  
 A Sháh, like this one, ne'er will look upon.  
 Woe for that royal mien, that height, and Grace !  
 Woe for that lofty star, that hand, and mace !  
 He decked the throne and crown, from Rúm and Chín  
 Took toll and tax, yet passed as he had been  
 Some starving mendicant ! When all was done  
 What profited his halls aloft the sun ?  
 He and the pauper fare the selfsame path,  
 And each of grief and pain a scantling hath.  
 The dear delights of earth, the sovereign sway,  
 What boot they ? Soon thy rule will pass away.  
 Blest is the pious mendicant and wise,  
 Whose ears oft feel the world's rough pleasantries,  
 For, when he passeth, he will leave behind  
 A good name and a good conclusion find.  
 His portion is in heaven, and in God's sight

He will have honour, not be in my plight,  
In miserable case, calamitous,  
With all that I possess sent Hell-ward thus  
Beyond recall ! No hope in heaven I see,  
My hand is void, both worlds have ruined me !

Now, if I can collect my thoughts again,  
The rule of Yazdagird shall be my strain.

## XXXVI

## YAZDAGIRD SON OF BAHRÁM GÚR

HE REIGNED EIGHTEEN YEARS

## NOTE

The length of the reign of this Sháh (Isdigerd II, A.D. 438-457), as given by Firdausí, appears to be about correct. From the point of view of popular tradition he seems wholly to have been overshadowed by his famous father, and his reign consequently is all but a blank in the Sháhnáma. Historically it was full of incident, and Firdausí's statement—

“He sent out countless hosts on every side,  
And kept the world secure from enemies,”

though it may be only a conventional statement, is correct enough. He began his reign with a war with Rúm. This was soon over, but was followed by long wars with the Huns and the Haitálians. Within the empire there were persecutions of the Jews and Christians, and about A.D. 450 serious trouble in Armenia. Yazdagird, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> continued his father's minister, Mihr Narsi, in power. According to Mas'údi he fortified the passes in the Caucasus.<sup>2</sup> He was known to his subjects by two titles—“The Clement”<sup>3</sup> and “The soldier's friend.”<sup>4</sup>

Of the two sons of Yazdagird it is not certain historically which was the elder, but as Pirúz was successful in the struggle for the throne that followed on the death of his father, he in any case would have been made out to be the elder in order to regularise the succession, and the elder he is according to all the Oriental authorities. In dating his coins he ignored the short reign of his brother Hurmuz.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> MM, ii. 193. Cf. Vol. i. pp. 16 and note.

<sup>3</sup> ZT, ii. p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> RM, I, ii. 363.

<sup>5</sup> NT, p. 426.

## § I

*How Yazdagird sat upon the Throne and exhorted the  
Captains of the Host*

- C. 1588 When Yazdagird became the world's great king  
 He gathered unto him the scattered troops.  
 There was a conclave of the wise and noble,  
 The great men and the princely archimages.  
 The atheling sat on the golden throne,  
 He shut the door of toil, the hand of evil,  
 And thus began : " He that committeth not  
 A wrong is not in danger of the avenger,  
 But when a heart is darkening with envy  
 The Dív will be called in to medicine it,  
 For envy causeth greed and grief and want,  
 And is a cruel and revengeful dív.  
 Impute not to a foeman's heart and hand  
 That which displeaseth thee. Humanity  
 Is wisdom's brother. Wisdom is the crown  
 Upon the head of knowledge. What time thou  
 Conferrest benefits on any one  
 Din it not into him and break his heart.  
 If thou dost good and art longsuffering  
 Thou art not worthless in a wise man's eyes.  
 If now victorious fortune shall assist me  
 In furthering my wishes in the world  
 I will prepare a roll of righteousness  
 Without an entry of deceit or wrong."
- He ruled the world in justice for a while ;  
 The age rejoiced in him and he rejoiced.  
 He sent forth countless hosts on every side,  
 And kept the world secure from enemies.  
 When eighteen years had passed above his head,  
 He grieved because his fortune was bedimmed,  
 Convoked to him the magnates and the sages,

Caused them to kneel before the golden throne,  
 And thus addressed them : “ This untoward sky,  
 Not knowing fosterling and fosterer,  
 And heeding not the crowns of potentates,  
 Pursueth every quarry in its path ;  
 So now my time is drawing to its close,  
 And all my strength is broken. I bestow  
 The crown, the signet-ring, the host, and all  
 The treasures of Irán upon Hurmuz ;  
 Pay due observance, execute my bidding,  
 And make my will the music of your souls.  
 Although Pírúz hath Grace divine and stature,  
 And is the elder brother of Hurmuz ;  
 Yet see I in Hurmuz deliberation,  
 With wisdom, modesty, and aptitude.”

He spake and lived a se'nnight afterwards ;  
 Then passed ; the throne wept over him awhile.

Be thy years twenty-five, be they five score,  
 Soon will this fleeting show be thine no more,  
 Regard then as a transitory thing  
 Whatever falleth to thy reckoning.

C. 1589

## HURMUZ

## HE REIGNÈD ONE YEAR

## NOTE

The earliest coins of Pírúz date from his third year as he reckoned it, counting from his father's death, so the reign of Hurmuz (Hormisdas, A.D. 457-459) lasted about two years.<sup>1</sup> Hurmuz probably had the advantage of being on the spot at the time of Yazdagird's death, but Pírúz may have had the better right to the throne,<sup>2</sup> and seems to have owed much to the services of a leader named Ruhhám—a scion of the great Mihrán clan which was of Arsacid descent.<sup>3</sup> The name is a familiar one to students of the Sháhnáma as that of one of those secondary heroes many of whom—real personages in the Parthian epoch—have been reflected back to the mythical periods of the poem.<sup>4</sup> Ruhhám, as we have seen, was one of the Twelve (eleven) Champions.<sup>5</sup> Whether Pírúz also received formal help from the Haitálians is doubtful, but plenty of nomad tribes would be willing to take service with him for a consideration, and if they happened to be within the Haitálian sphere of influence would be regarded as Haitálians themselves by tradition. For the consideration required in the text Tabarí substitutes Tálíkán.<sup>6</sup> This is much more probable. Tirmid is mentioned because it would represent the traditional notion of the Oxus being the boundary between Írán and Túrán. On the other hand settlements in the desert, such as Tálíkán, were valuable both for trade and in war.<sup>7</sup> Firdausi's statement that Pírúz pardoned Hurmuz is supported by Dínawari and Mír Khánd, but two out of the three accounts in Tabarí say that Hurmuz was put to death. The third says that he was imprisoned. In all probability he was executed.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 426.<sup>2</sup> See p. 153.<sup>3</sup> NT, pp. 114, 139 and *notes*.<sup>4</sup> See Vol. iii. p. 9.<sup>5</sup> See Vol. iv. p. 102.<sup>6</sup> NT, p. 116 *seq.* and *notes*.<sup>7</sup> *Id.*<sup>8</sup> *Id.* 117 *seq.* and *notes*, RM, I, ii. 364.

## § I

*How Hurmuz, Son of Yazdagird, ascended the Throne*

Hurmuz succeeded to his father's throne,  
 And set upon his head the crown of gold,  
 While, thou hadst said, Pírúz was all one rage  
 With tears of envy mounting to his eyes.  
 He went incontinent with troops and treasures,  
 And many chiefs, to the Haitálian king,  
 Who was a princeling of Chaghán, a man  
 Of high ambition and possessed of troops,  
 Of treasure, and of power, hight Faghánísh.  
 To him Pírúz said : " O good friend of mine !  
 Two sons were we—the glories of the throne.  
 Our father gave the younger of us twain  
 The royal crown and, having acted thus  
 Unjustly, died. If thou wilt give me troops  
 I have myself wealth, weapons, majesty,  
 And might of hand."

The monarch of Chaghán  
 Replied : " 'Tis well, thy sire was king himself.  
 I will point out the way to get thy rights,  
 And furnish thee with troops upon these terms :  
 That I shall have Tirmid and Wísagird,  
 To which effect I hold a covenant  
 From Yazdagird."

Pírúz said : " Yea, 'tis well,  
 And thou deservest greater sovereignty."

The monarch gave him thirty thousand swordsmen—  
 A noble army of Haitálians—  
 Wherewith Pírúz, the Sháh, arrayed a host  
 That darkened sky and moon with flying dust.  
 He fought with king Hurmuz who could not long  
 Endure the stress of war but presently  
 Was taken, and his father's crown and throne

Grew worthless to him. When Pírúz beheld  
His brother's face he yearned for love and union,  
Bade him remount and sped to grasp his hand,  
Dispatched him to the palace and declared  
His own conditions. Said Hurmuz to him :—  
“ Thank God that those who worship Him are wise.  
My brother taketh from me crown and throne ;  
Be victory both in name <sup>1</sup> and deed his own.”

<sup>1</sup> Pírúz means victorious.

# XXXVIII

## PÍRÚZ

### HE REIGNED ELEVEN YEARS

#### ARGUMENT

Pírúz becomes undisputed Sháh. His inaugural speech. The land is troubled by a severe drought which Pírúz takes measures to mitigate. The breaking of the drought. Pírúz builds cities and, in violation of the treaty of Sháh Bahrám Gúr, makes war upon the Haitálians, is defeated, and killed.

#### NOTE

The reign of Pírúz (Perozes, A.D. 459-484) lasted much longer than eleven years, and seems to have made a deep impression on the popular mind by reason of its accumulation of mishaps. The expedition against the Haitálians was preceded by a few months by a total eclipse of the sun<sup>1</sup>—a portent of disaster that well may have helped to bring about its own fulfilment. Mir Khánd tells us that this Sháh's sobriquet was “The Valiant.”<sup>2</sup>

A relic of Pírúz—a cup engraved with a representation of that Sháh engaged in hunting—is said to be still in existence.<sup>3</sup>

§ 1. Drought is common enough in Irán, and the record shows that this particular one must have been of exceptional severity. According to Tabarí the relief measures adopted by Pírúz to cope with the emergency were so efficient that only one man perished through want.<sup>4</sup> Tabarí of course is merely giving the statements of his authorities without comment.

§§ 2-4. According to the account in Tabarí, Pírúz built three cities—Rám-Pírúz (the Pírúz-Rám of Firdausí) in the territory of

<sup>1</sup> On Saturday, January 14th, A.D. 484. NT, p. 425.

<sup>2</sup> RM, I, i. 368.                   <sup>3</sup> RSM, p. 329.                   <sup>4</sup> NT, pp. 119, 122.

Rai, another called Rúshan Pírúz, and a third named Shahrám-Pírúz (Firdausí's Bádán Pírúz) in Ázarbáiján.<sup>1</sup>

The tradition given in the Sháhnáma of the war between Pírúz and the Haitálians is dominated by the memory of the beloved and popular Bahram Gúr. We have seen how that Sháh, after his triumphant campaign against that people, set up a pillar that was to mark the boundary between them and the Iránians.<sup>2</sup> The presumption in the poem is that the arrangement then made continued in force till Pírúz refused to be bound by it any longer. His refusal brought death upon himself and disaster on his host. Clearly this was a judgment upon him for violating the treaty made by his grandfather. Naturally if Pírúz had been successful a different popular estimate would have been formed upon his conduct, but as matters turned out he was manifestly a wrong-doer for having left his grandsire's way and he merely got his deserts. Consequently on this occasion right was on the side of the enemy, and for a time the tradition becomes almost pro-Haitálian. Between the memory of a great popular Sháh and the occurrence of a great national disaster practically nothing remained, and the two are linked together as cause and effect. Historically, as we know from other sources, the case was very different. Bahram Gúr's son and successor, Yazdagird, had plenty of trouble with the Haitálians,<sup>3</sup> and so had, it would seem, Pírúz himself before the final disaster overtook him. Once, if not twice, he had been forced to conclude an unfavourable peace with them, had found himself in their power, and his son, Kubád, had on one occasion to remain two years in captivity until a heavy ransom had been paid. If the story of the help given by the Haitálians to Piriz against his brother, Hurmuz, at the price of the cession of Tálíkán be unhistorical it was probably at one of these conclusions of peace that the place was ceded.<sup>4</sup> Popular tradition may have preferred to represent Tálíkán as being yielded to secure the throne for the rightful heir rather than as the consideration for a disgraceful treaty later on. Pírúz violated his own compact, not Bahram's, and perished in consequence. There are three accounts of the disaster in Tabari. They are in accord in essentials, and two of them attribute the proximate cause of the overthrow of Pírúz to the trench dug by the Haitálian king who in these accounts is called Achshunwar or Akhshunwar approximately, but in the absence of diacritical and vowel points the precise form is uncertain. According to one account it was the evil practices of the

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> pp. 156, 157, NT, p. 119, note.

Haitálian king that impelled Pírúz to declare war, and four sons and four brothers perished with him.<sup>1</sup> The second, which comes from Ibn Mukaffa,<sup>2</sup> states that there were two campaigns. In the first of them Pírúz was led astray by an Haitálian chief, who had had himself purposely mutilated in order to deceive the Sháh, and forced to sue for peace. Subsequently wounded honour induced him to tear up the treaty and renew the struggle in spite of the advice of his counsellors; he perished, and his baggage, women, money, and papers fell into the hands of the enemy.<sup>3</sup> In the third account mention is made of Bahram Gúr's pillar, and Pírúz is said to have had it thrown down and dragged in front of him by fifty elephants and three hundred men that he might not be charged with passing it. This account also states that a daughter of Pírúz was among the captives taken by the Haitálians. Their king put her into his haram, and she had a daughter who afterwards married her uncle Kubád.<sup>4</sup> There can be no doubt but that a terrible disaster befell the Iránian arms in this campaign and, as we shall see presently,<sup>5</sup> the memory of it was reflected back upon the mythical past and the story retold in connexion with the overthrow of a Pishdádian Sháh.

## § I

*How Pirúz sat upon the Throne and made an Oration*

Pírúz, at ease about Hurmuz and free  
 From care, came, sat upon the royal throne,  
 As well became a Sháh that worshipped God,  
 And at the outset thus harangued the chiefs :—  
 “ Ye worshipful and noble lords ! I ask  
 The Judge that needeth naught to grant to me  
 Long life, a due regard for great and small  
 As their conditions are, abundant wisdom,  
 And happy days. Longsuffering is the crown  
 Upon humanity ; the hasty man  
 Is ever in abasement. Wisdom’s pillars

C. 159

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 120.<sup>2</sup> For whom see Vol. vi. p. 17; NT, p. 121, note.<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 128 *seq.* and *notes.*<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 123 *seq.*<sup>5</sup> p. 171.

Are equity and mercy, its adornment  
 Is bounty's gate, the tongue of eloquence  
 Its glory, while its plumes are hardihood  
 And fortitude. How shall mere high estate,  
 If wisdom fail, enjoy the throne of greatness ?  
 E'en sages are but mortal and possess not  
 More Grace than had Jamshíd who died, what time  
 His crown had reached the moon, and gave another  
 His royal seat. None can abide on earth  
 For aye. Take refuge then with God from ill,  
 And all is said."

Wise and untouched by evil  
 He ruled one year with justice and good counsel.  
 Next year the face of heaven was dry, the water  
 Shrunk in the streams till it became like musk.  
 The third and fourth year it was even so,  
 And all men were in misery through the drought ;  
 The mouth of heaven became as dry as dust,  
 And river-water was a precious drug ;  
 There was no room to stand, such multitudes  
 Of men and beasts lay dead. The king of kings  
 Beheld that portent, took off tax and toll,  
 And in each city where he kept his stores  
 Bestowed them freely on both small and great.  
 A proclamation issued from the court :—  
 "Distribute, O ye men of name and might !  
 Such grain as ye possess and heap instead  
 Your treasures with coins struck by Pírúz.  
 Whoe'er possesseth hoarded stores of grain,  
 Or sheep or oxen roaming at their will,  
 Let him dispose thereof at his own price,  
 For lives are perishing for lack of food."

C. 1591

He sent another letter in all haste  
 To every officer and potentate :—  
 "Ope wide your barns to all folk everywhere  
 That are in need. Should young or old and feeble

Die lacking bread—a victim to the famine—  
 I will pour out his blood that hath the barn,  
 For he hath scorned God's work. His waist will I  
 Cleave with the trenchant scimitar and wreck  
 His life."

He ordered folk to quit their homes,  
 And coming plainwards lift their hands in plaint.  
 A cry of bitter weeping and distress,  
 Of pain and consternation rose to heaven ;  
 On hill and waste, in desert and in cave,  
 They called on God for mercy. On this wise  
 For seven years both small and great beheld  
 No verdure anywhere. With Farwardín,  
 The eighth year, rose a glorious cloud which rained  
 Pearls on the parched up soil. The scent of musk  
 Rose from the gardens while the hail that fell  
 Lay in the mud like pears within a bowl ;  
 The rainbow was resplendent in the sky,  
 The age escaped the ill of evil men,  
 And everywhere the bow was strung again.

## § 2

*How Pirúz built the Cities of Pírúz-Rám and Bádán-Pírúz,  
 and how he went to war with Túrán*

Now when Pírúz had 'scaped that day of stress  
 He sat in peace upon the throne of kingship,<sup>1</sup>  
 He built himself a city which he bade  
 Call Pírúz-Rám, the world hath good thereof,  
 For 'tis the pleasance of the glorious Sháhs.  
 He built withal Bádán-Pírúz, far-famed,  
 A place of peace and joy, now Ardabil,  
 Where Cæsar hath of right his boundary.

<sup>1</sup> The previous section ends here in C.

C. 1592

Whenas Pírúz had prospered all these parts,  
 And made thereby the hearts of wise men glad,  
 He gave a largess to his noble troops,  
 And gat him ready to attack the Turkmans.  
 In that campaign Hurmuz was in the van  
 With troops new-levied ; after Sháh Pírúz  
 Kubád led <sup>1</sup> on the army like a blast ;  
 Pírúz' pure son was he, wise, and a bough  
 That brought forth fruit. Balásh, the younger son,<sup>2</sup>  
 A man of Grace and justice, sat rejoicing  
 Upon the throne while one of Párs, a man  
 Of high renown called by the king Sarkhán,<sup>3</sup>  
 Was bidden by Pírúz : “ Abide thou here  
 As upright minister before Balásh.”<sup>4</sup>

Pírúz set forward with his troops, his treasure,  
 And gear of war, to fight with Khúshnawáz.  
 Now brave Bahrám had marked the boundary  
 By setting up a column on the plain  
 With this inscription by the king of kings :—  
 “ Let not a Turkman or Iránian  
 Transgress this boundary on any wisc,  
 Or pass across the river.”

When Pírúz,  
 The lion-queller, reached that spot he saw  
 The mark set by the monarch of Irán,  
 And thus addressed his chiefs : “ By this same token  
 Will I erect with scimitar and treasure  
 A tower against the Turkmans so that none  
 May suffer from the Haitálans. When 'tis raised  
 On the Tarak, and when their chiefs shall bring  
 The former treaty, I will say : ‘ Bahrám Gúr  
 Did thus by manhood, wisdom, might, and Grace,  
 But I will leave no trace of Khúshnawáz,  
 Haitálian or Turkman, high or low.’ ”

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 170.<sup>3</sup> Súfarai, for whom see pp. 170, 173 seq., 185.<sup>4</sup> Couplet omitted.

When Khúshnawáz, son of the Khán, had heard :—  
 “The Sháh and all his host have crossed Jíhún  
 Against the treaty that Bahrám Gúr made :  
 Fresh war and strife have come upon the land,”  
 A veteran scribe was called by his command.

## § 3

*The Letter of Khúshnawáz to Pírúz*

He wrote a letter to the king of earth,  
 With<sup>1</sup> praises of him from the righteous Judge,  
 Then said : “Since thou departest from the pact  
 Made by just kings I will not call thee royal.  
 Thine ancestors had acted never so,  
 Those rulers of the world elect and pure.  
 By breaking thus the compact of the Persians,  
 And flinging to the dust the mark of greatness,<sup>2</sup>  
 Thou forcest me to break the treaty also,  
 And draw the scimitar in self-defence.”

He wrote at large and sent too many gifts.  
 A noble cavalier and eloquent  
 Went with the letter which when Sháh Pírúz  
 Had read he raged against that famous prince,  
 And bade the envoy : “Rise and get thee gone,  
 Return to that base man and say to him :—  
 ‘Bahrám concluded terms of peace whereby  
 The country was your own to the Tarak,  
 But now thou hast the whole to the Jíhún,  
 Hill, dale, and desert, all alike are thine.  
 Behold ! I lead a vast, a noble host,  
 And warriors bent on fight, and I will leave not  
 For long on earth the shade of Khúshnawáz.’”

C. 1593

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> “la marque de la frontière établie par les grands” (Mohl).

The envoy came like flying dust and told  
 What he had heard. When Khúshnawáz had hearkened  
 Thereto, and read what had been writ to him,  
 He called his scattered followers to horse,  
 Led forth the army to the battlefield,  
 And set upon a lance's point the treaty  
 Accorded to his grandsire by Bahrám  
 To this effect : "Our frontier is Jíhún."

He chose a man of mark among the troops—  
 One who was shrewd of heart and eloquent—  
 And said : "Approach Pírúz with courteous words,  
 Hear his reply, and say : 'I will confront thee  
 Upon the march with thine own grandsire's treaty—  
 That man of lofty fortune, thine own guide—  
 Set on a spearhead like a shining sun  
 Before the host that all possessed of wisdom  
 May look upon the patent of the just.  
 I shall be praised while thou wilt be condemned,  
 And called "The impious Sháh." God and his wor-  
 shippers,  
 And subjects everywhere, will not approve  
 That any one should seek to do injustice,  
 And break the treaties of the kings of kings.  
 None like to Sháh Bahrám for equity  
 And manhood e'er set crown upon his head.  
 God is my witness, and it is not well  
 To have to make appeal to Him, that thou  
 Art with injustice seeking war with me  
 In falling thus upon me with thy host.  
 Herein thou wilt be not victorious,  
 And likewise get no fruitage from good fortune.  
 Henceforward I shall send no messengers :  
 God will avail to aid me in this fight.'"

The envoy came dust-swift with this dispatch,<sup>1</sup>  
 And to Pírúz repeated all these words.

<sup>1</sup> We have not been told that Khúshnawáz wrote one.

When that haught Sháh had read what Khúshnawáz  
 Had written in the letter he was wroth,  
 And said thus to the envoy : " One of years  
 And world-experience would speak not like that ;  
 But if from Chách thou comest o'er the river  
 My spearheads are prepared to welcome thee."

The messenger returned to Khúshnawáz,  
 Spake with him privily at large, and said :—  
 " I see not in Pírúz a reverence  
 For God ; he hath not wisdom for his guide ;  
 He careth only for revenge and strife,  
 And walketh not according to God's will."

When Khúshnawáz had heard these words he sought C. 159  
 To God for shelter, making supplication,  
 And saying : " O Thou Judge that judgest right,  
 And art the Master both of wind and dust !  
 Thou knowest that iniquitous Pírúz  
 Is not in prowess better than Bahrám.  
 He speaketh words unjust and fain would win  
 Addition by the scimitar. Break Thou  
 His foot-hold from the earth. Oh ! may he have  
 No strength, no wit, no heart ! "

Around his host <sup>1</sup>  
 He dug a trench which he made shift to hide ;  
 'Twas lasso-deep and twenty cubits wide.

#### § 4

*How Pírúz fought with Khúshnawáz and was slain*

This done, he called on God and marched his powers  
 From Samarkand. On that side Sháh Pírúz,  
 The frantic, led his troops on like a blast ;  
 On this side Khúshnawáz with fearful heart

<sup>1</sup> i.e. where he intended to make his stand.

Prayed privily before the holy Judge.  
 The drums and trumpets sounded in both hosts,  
 The air was ebon with the armies' dust,  
 And from them both such showers of arrows rained  
 That blood ran down like water in a stream.  
 Then, like a dust-cloud, Sháh Pírúz advanced  
 With mace and Rúman helm, and as he drew  
 Ancar to Khúshnawáz,<sup>1</sup> the Turkmans' chief  
 Retreated, turned his rein, and showed his back.  
 The foeman followed fiercely. Sháh Pírúz  
 Spurred forward with few followers and fell  
 With others—chiefs and Lions of the day  
 Of battle—in the fosse, such as Hurmuz  
 His brother, glorious Kubád and others—  
 Great men and princes of the royal race—  
 Till seven had fallen headlong, men of name  
 With golden casques. Then Khúshnawáz returned  
 Rejoicing to the fosse and lifted thence  
 The living while the throne bewailed their fortune.  
 Now Sháh Pírúz, that chief of chiefs endowed  
 With Grace and state, had broken head and back,  
 While of the princes, save Kubád, none lived :  
 Thus host and empire went adown the wind.  
 Then Khúshnawáz advanced with heart content,  
 And head exalted with his warrior-host,  
 And gave to spoil the baggage and the foe,  
 For right and left were indistinguishable.  
 They made some prisoners and what numbers more  
 Were stretched by arrows on the sombre soil !

C. 1595      'Tis not for world-lords to be covetous,  
                 For hearts that covet are the dark dust's mate ;  
                 The never-resting sky ordaineth thus  
                 Alike for subjects and for king's estate,  
                 And wringeth its own fosterling, be he  
                 A fool or wisdom's pillar. None can stay

<sup>1</sup> The sentence thus far has been translated from P.

Upon this earth of ours eternally.

Make right thy provand : naught is left to say.  
When Khúshnawáz had crossed the fosse his troops  
Lacked not for wealth. They bound Kubád with  
fetters

Of iron, heedless of his throne and race.

When tidings reached the people of Irán  
About the fosse and how Pírúz had fought,  
A wail of anguish went up from the land  
For all those princes—men of high degree—  
And when the tidings had been certified  
Balásh descended from his golden seat,  
Plucked out his royal locks and strewed sad dust  
Upon the throne. Within Irán the host,  
The cities and the women, men, and children,  
All wailed, all rent the hair and tore the face  
For grief, talked of the Sháh and yearned for him ;  
All sat in dole and woe while great and small  
Took thought what course to choose and whether they  
Should quit Irán and see where fell the fray ?

# XXXIX

## B A L Á S H

### HE REIGNED FIVE YEARS AND TWO MONTHS

#### ARGUMENT

Balish becomes Sháh. Súfarai leads forth a host against the Haitálians to avenge the death of Píruz and defeats them. Terms of peace are arranged, Kubád and the other captives are released, and Súfarai returns with them in triumph to Irán. After some years Súfarai dethrones Balásh and makes Kubád Sháh.

#### NOTE

Balish (Balas, A.D. 484–488) seems to have been the brother, not the son, of Píruz and the uncle of Kubád.<sup>1</sup> The name is identical with the more familiar Vologeses. Balish being on the spot and regent at the time of the death of Píruz naturally became Sháh. Tabarí says that he had to fight for the throne with his brother (really his nephew), Kubád, who fled to the Haitálians. The real struggle however appears to have been with Kubád's brother, Zirih, who was defeated and slain.<sup>2</sup>

§§ 2 and 3. Píruz having expiated by his own death his violation of the treaty made by his grandfather, Sháh Bahrám Gúr, with the Haitálians, popular tradition is at liberty to resume a patriotic attitude and set forth how Píruz was avenged and Fránián honour vindicated. Unfortunately the account does not appear in the oldest authorities and seems to be unhistorical. Frán at that time was much oppressed by, if not actually tributary to, the Haitálians.<sup>3</sup> Súfarai's triumphant campaign seems to have been invented as a salve to the national honour and, incidently, as a glorification of

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<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 133 *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 119 *note*. That the scene of Súfarai's victory should be laid at Kashmíhan, where Bahrám Gúr had triumphed, is in itself suspicious. See pp. 89, 90.

the great family of Káran to which he belonged. The story of his success appears, as Nöldeke has pointed out, to have been reflected back into mythical times and told in connexion with Naudar, the Pishdáidian Sháh. Certainly the parallel is very complete. In both cases the Iránian host is overthrown by a Northern foe; in both the Sháh perishes; in both the scene is laid in the same neighbourhood; in both the defeat is avenged by a Káran, and in both cases the prisoners are rescued.<sup>1</sup> In Tabarí's account Súfarai appears as Súkhrá.<sup>2</sup> As a leading Iránian of the time he may have been instrumental in bringing about a peace with the Haitálans after the death of Píruz, and this perhaps may be regarded as the historical measure of his achievement.<sup>3</sup>

Balásh appears to have been somewhat after the type of Yazdagird, son of Shápür, in character,<sup>4</sup> mild and tolerant, approved by the Christians and hated by the Magi who, it is said, were scandalised at his attempt to introduce the Roman fashion of public baths, which of course involved a profanation of the sacred element. As his treasury was exhausted he was unable to look to the army for support, and after a reign of four years was dethroned and blinded. According to other accounts he died a natural death.<sup>5</sup> Mír Khánd says that he was known as "the beloved."<sup>6</sup>

### § I

#### *How Balásh ascended the Throne and harangued the Iránians*

Whenas Balásh had mourned one month, with dust  
Upon his head and lacerated cheeks,  
The people and the high priest came to him  
With valiant warriors and famous sages.  
They spake with him at large by way of counsel  
In profitable words, then seated him  
Upon the throne of kingship, showering gold  
And jewels over him abundantly.  
When seated on the throne he said : " O chiefs !  
Acquire the secrets of the sages' hearts,

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 345 *seq.*, and NIN, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 120 *note*.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, and RSM, p. 332.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 371.

<sup>5</sup> NT, pp. 133 *seq.* and *notes*; RSM, p. 336 and *note*.

<sup>6</sup> RM, Pt. I, Vol. ii. p. 371.

And ye shall have advancement at my hands  
When my dark counsels brighten. Frustrate not  
The purpose of well-doers in the world.

As for the wicked and malicious man,  
He shall not partner me, but first will I  
Enrich him with advice and, if that faileth,

C. 1596 Crown him with blood. When any subject plaineth  
To us 'gainst some one of this loyal host  
The heart of the unjust one will I break,  
And rase him utterly, both root and branch.  
See that ye take no freedoms with your Sháh,  
And in especial one that is devout,  
For he by turns is bane and antidote ;  
So choose the antidote and leave the bane.  
Of all things seek to please the Sháh and never  
Approach his throne unless with joyful looks.  
When he is wroth excuse thyself and bless him,  
Just or unjust. Whene'er thou sayest : 'I  
Am wise, and I am mighty in all knowledge,'  
Know that thou never wast more ignorant ;  
So be not thine own enemy. If now  
Ye shall obey the counsel that I give  
By hearkening to my profitable words,  
Ye shall receive the treasures of wise Sháhs :  
I never yet saw knowledge injure any."

The chieftains marvelled at his understanding,  
And called down praises on him, while the troops  
Spake thus to one another : " From this Sháh  
Will fall a lustre on the throne and crown.  
God grant that he escape the evil eye,  
And ill befall the persons of his foes."

They went forth from his palace well content,  
Committing to God's care his soul and body.  
Their hearts were full of love, their tongues of praise :—  
" May such a Sháh have endless length of days."

## § 2

*How Súfarai had Tidings of the Slaying of Pírúz, how he wrote a Letter to Khúshnawáz, and how Khúshnawáz replied*

What time Pírúz was going to the war  
 He sought a paladin—a man of counsel  
 And weight—to watch o'er crown and throne, and be  
 A friend to young Balásh. Now Súfarai—  
 A man of great estate and good withal—  
 Was fitted for that task, experienced,  
 A native of Shíráz, a general,  
 A man exalted both in heart and head,  
 And likewise marchlord in Zábulistán,  
 Kábulistán, Ghazní, and Bust. When tidings  
 About Pírúz, uncounselled and unguided,  
 Came his eye-lashes drenched his cheeks with tears,  
 He rent his raiment of a paladin,  
 The warriors doffed their helmets and sat mourning  
 Through sorrow for the Sháh, while Súfarai  
 Exclaimed : “ How shall Balásh, youth that he is,  
 Seek vengeance for Pírúz ? ” for well he knew  
 That that would naught avail and that the throne      C. 1597  
 Of kingship was in evil case. He gathered  
 His scattered soldiers, beat the kettledrums,  
 And dust rose from the plain. There came to him  
 A hundred thousand warlike, vengeful swordsmen.  
 He paid, equipped the host, and joyed the hearts  
 Of all that sought for vengeance. Then he called  
 A sweet-tongued envoy watchful, wise, and shrewd,  
 And, seared and sorry, wan and weeping, wrote  
 A letter of wise counsels, instancing  
 Jamshíd and Kai Khusrau and Kai Kubád,  
 Dispatched it to Balásh, and said : “ O Sháh !  
 Be not aggrieved at death ; it is a grief  
 That all must taste ; choose patience and choose fame.

What came from wind returneth with the breath :  
 Some call it justice and some tyranny.  
 Now with the approbation of the king  
 Will I make ready for revenge and strife  
 Because the sun and moon cry out in heaven  
 For vengeance for the blood of Sháh Pírúz.”

With that the envoy went upon his way,  
 And Súfarai, all wreakful, for his part  
 Arrayed his army like a pheasant’s plumes,<sup>1</sup>  
 And from Zábulistán advanced toward Marv.  
 He chose him out a wary messenger,  
 Who by his words could mollify the heart,  
 And spake on this wise to a scribe : “ Arise,  
 Because thy pen hath stirring work to do,  
 Indite to Khúshnawáz and say : ‘ O fool,  
 And knavish doer of the work of dívs !  
 Thou art in God’s sight guilty, and thy shirt  
 Shall wail for thee. Whoe’er did deed like thine,  
 Thou faithless one ? Thou shalt behold anon  
 The sword of tribulation. Thou hast slain  
 A man without offence—the king of kings,  
 The grandson of the world-lord Sháh Bahrám—  
 And hast set up a new feud in the world,  
 A feud to be forgotten nevermore.  
 Why, when the din of tymbals rose, didst thou  
 Not come and fawn upon him like a dog ?  
 Thy grandsiro was a poor man of thy tribe,  
 Thy sire was like a slave before Bahrám.  
 Lo ! I have come to Marv to seek revenge,  
 And I will waste the Haitálians utterly.  
 The captives and whatever booty came  
 Within thy grasp upon that battlefield,  
 I will exact all with the sword of vengeance,  
 And bear to Marv Túrán’s dust, suffer not  
 The world to be thy son’s, burn all thy kith

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 88, note.

And kin, cut off thy head by God's command,  
 And make thy kingdom like a sea of blood.  
 But this is not revenge ; why talk I long ?  
 When Khúshnawáz, in that he slew Pírúz,  
 Shall rot in darksome dust his soul shall plead  
 His cause from Hell.' "

C. 1598

The envoy with the letter  
 Of Súfarai went like a mighty lion,  
 Came in an angry mood to Khúshnawáz,  
 Appeared before his throne, did reverence,  
 And gave the letter, while the captains present  
 Withdrawed. The monarch gave it to a scribe,  
 And said : " Read out to me in confidence  
 Both good and ill."

The scribe thus answered him :—

" This letter is all arrow, mace, and sword,"  
 And sorely grieved was valiant Khúshnawáz  
 At that long letter writ by Súfarai,  
 Then set himself without delay to answer  
 The good and ill there written and began :—  
 " I live in fear of God and fortune's changes.  
 A worshipper of His would not have broken  
 The compact of the Sháhs. I sent Pírúz  
 A letter of advice besides the treaty  
 Of that great king,<sup>1</sup> but he despised my words,  
 And spurned the old king's pact. When he assailed me,  
 And put me to a shift, and when the hosts  
 Met face to face, the stars raged at Pírúz,  
 And by no will of ours thy Sháh was slain.  
 Or e'er he broke the pact of righteous Sháhs  
 His youth had not another day of joy ;  
 He found <sup>2</sup> no favour in the Maker's eyes ;  
 Thou wouldst have said : ' Earth took him by the  
 heel.' <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bahrám Gúr. See p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> " Foot " in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Reading with P.

The man that breaketh his forefather's treaty,  
 And flingeth underfoot the head of right,  
 Is like Pírúz upon the battlefield,  
 Pashed in a dusty ditch. So shalt thou be  
 If thou shalt come ; my wealth and warriors fail not.'

Departing with the letter and apace  
 The envoy in a week reached Súfarai,  
 Who read and loosed his tongue in malisons.  
 Then from the plain the people heard the blare  
 Of trumpets and the clash of brazen cymbals,  
 And Súfarai led forth to Kashmíhan  
 A host so great that Sol was lost in heaven.  
 'Twas thus they crossed the stream—an armament  
 That made itself at home where'er it went.

### § 3

*How Súfarai fought with Khúshnawáz, and how Kubád  
 was released from his Bondage*

C. 1599 When tidings came to Khúshnawáz he marched  
 Out to the desert and prepared for war.  
 He reached Baigand and chose a battlefield  
 That hid the wilderness from circling heaven  
 With troops.

On his side vengeful Súfarai  
 Came onward like a blast. When it was night  
 That leader of the army occupied  
 All the approaches with fresh elephants.  
 The outposts went their rounds in both the hosts,  
 The world resounded with the warriors' shouts,  
 The challenge of the sentries and the clang  
 Of bells rose from both armies, front and rear,  
 Till Sol rose o'er the peaks and made the dales  
 And deserts like white crystal. Both arrays  
 Prepared for strife ; each raised the flag of greatness.

Then dragons' livers sundered at the shouting  
 Of valiant warriors while feathered shafts  
 Made air all vultures' plumes, and earth became  
 A bath of chieftains' blood. Where'er one gazed  
 Lay heaps of warriors slain. Then Súfarai  
 Charged from the centre with his troops amain,  
 While Khúshnawáz on his side with his sword  
 Of vengeance spurred down from his vantage-ground ;  
 But when he saw that fortune proved unkind  
 He turned his rein and showed his back, pursued  
 By Súfarai as 'twere a raging blast,  
 Who followed with a head-transfixing spear.  
 He captured many nobles ; many more  
 Were slain by arrow and by scimitar.  
 He sped till he reached Kuhandizh and saw  
 No lack of slain and wounded on the way.  
 Then from the ramparts Khúshnawáz beheld  
 His troops spread o'er the desert's hills and dales ;  
 The way was strewn with dead and things of price  
 So that the plain was decked out like a garden.

The soldiers carried off to Súfarai  
 The harness, lances, coronets of state,  
 The battle-gear, the girdles, steeds, and slaves,  
 And made a heap as high as Mount Alburz.  
 He paid no heed to all that Turkman spoil,  
 But gave the whole in largess to his troops,  
 And thus harangued the host : " To-day's affair  
 Hath prospered for us to our hearts' content  
 Through fortune's favour, but what time the sun  
 Shall lift its hand in heaven we must not bide  
 Inactive on the plain but march like lions  
 Upon yon hold to avenge the king of kings."

His troops agreed and each man spake his mind.  
 Thus fared it with them till in arching heaven  
 The sun's resplendent diadem appeared,  
 Whereat the tymbals sounded in the camp,

C. 1600

And Súfarai bestrode his steed. An envoy  
 Reached that proud chief from Khúshnawáz to say :—  
 “ From battle, strife, and bloodshed naught resulteth  
 But travail and contention. Shall we then,  
 Who are two men of wisdom, young, and brave,  
 Send both our souls to Hell ? If thou wilt seek  
 Again the way of wisdom thou shalt learn  
 That all that happened was the work of God.  
 It was not through the blast that Sháh Pírúz  
 Was slain but rather that the stars foreclosed  
 For him his years and months. He was to blame  
 For breach of pact, for choosing colocynth,  
 And spurning honey. Now what was to be  
 Hath come upon our heads. Blest is the man  
 That walketh not the round of violence.  
 The captives and whatever spoil there was,  
 The gold, the silver, and the uncut gems,  
 The steeds, the weapons, and the crowns and thrones,  
 Left by Pírúz when fortune quitted him,  
 Both his own treasures and his troops' as well,  
 Will I send to the general of the Sháh  
 That thou mayst go victorious to Írán,  
 Mayst go back to the monarch of the brave.  
 I will not trespass on Írán ; do you,  
 For your part, keep the treaty of Bahrám.  
 The king of kings apportioned earth aright :  
 Túrán and Chín are ours, Írán is thine.”

When Súfarai had heard the embassage  
 He called the soldiers to his tent-enclosure,  
 And in their presence bade the messenger :—  
 “ Repeat before the host the foeman's words.”

He came and gave them, keeping nothing back.  
 Then Súfarai addressed his army thus :—  
 “ What in your view should be our policy  
 Herein ? ”

The troops replied : “ 'Tis thine to bid,

And thine to stipulate the terms of peace.  
None knoweth better in Írán than thou :  
Thou art our king, our leader, and our lord.”

Thus to his noble chiefs spake Súfarai :—  
“ The only policy for us to-day  
Is this—to seek no more to fight with them.  
I will lead back the army to Írán  
With speed, because Kubád,<sup>1</sup> son of Pírúz,  
One of the royal race, is in their hands  
With the high priest Ardshír and army-leaders,  
Both young and old. If we fight Khúshnawáz  
The matter will be long and profitless,  
And they will slaughter their Íránián captives,  
Kubád, the world’s heir, and Ardshír. Howbeit,  
Unless Kubád had been in jeopardy,  
Ne’er had my heart and brain recalled to mind  
The high priest ; but if evil from the Turkmans  
Befall Kubád Írán will be all outery,  
And this shame current with our warriors  
Until the Resurrection. We will give  
A courteous answer to the messenger,  
And take fair counsels in the cause of peace.  
We then perchance may see Kubád again,  
(God grant that no one else be king of kings !)  
Ardshír the high priest and the other captives,  
Both young and old.”

C. 160

His soldiers blessed him, saying :—  
“ That is the treaty, precedent, and Faith  
For us.”

The paladin then called the envoy,  
And thus addressed him with a dulcet tongue :—  
“ It was the act of God—enough ! This world  
Designeth evil and appriseth none.  
The great men of Írán that have been taken  
Are these—Kubád and the high priest Ardshír.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kaikubád in the original.<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

These with the rest that have their feet in fetters  
 Dispatch to me in honourable fashion.  
 Moreover all the booty in your hands—  
 Dínárs and crowns and wealth of every kind—  
 Dispatch in full to me, and let it come  
 In presence of the chieftains of this host.  
 We will not stretch our hands to spoil and slay  
 Because we have no need and worship God.  
 Within ten days we will recross Jíhún,  
 And take no warlike step thenceforth. Give ear  
 To that which I have said and tell it all,  
 On thy return, to Khúshnawáz.”

The envoy  
 Returned forthwith to Khúshnawáz in triumph,  
 And gave the message. Khúshnawáz rejoiced,  
 And instantly released Kubád from bonds  
 With the high priest Ardshír and all the other  
 Iránian prisoners, collected all  
 The booty found upon the day of battle,  
 Besides the throne and crown of Sháh Píruz,  
 And what was scattered 'mongst his troops, and sent  
 All by a trusty man to Súfarai.

Now when the soldiers looked upon Kubád  
 They joyed to see him, the high priest Ardshír,  
 And all the other captives young and old.  
 The mighty men came from their tents and all  
 Stretched out their hands to heaven in gratitude  
 That they beheld the king of kings' own son  
 Unhurt with all the rest that most they prized.  
 Forthwith the chief broke up the camp, took horse,  
 And glad and triumphing repassed Jíhún  
 With that renowned high priest and with Kubád.<sup>1</sup>

When tidings reached the country of Frán  
 About that fortunate and glorious chief,  
 About his war and strife with Khúshnawáz,

And all his wonder-working policy :—

“ He hath returned glad and victorious

From war, Kubád hath been released from fetters,

And Súfarai hath brought withal Ardshír,

The high priest, and the Fránian prisoners ;

Just now he crossed o'er the Jihún, his host

Is on the plains and mountains of Frán,”

Such shouts ascended that thou wouldest have said :—

“ They deafened those that heard.” The prudent  
magnates

Arose and gat themselves in readiness

To go forth with their welcome while Balásh

Prepared a golden throne to seat Kubád,

And that chief paladin. When Súfarai

Arrived within the realm the great men all

Met, while the Sháh prepared the welcoming,

Set forward with such forces as he had,

And when he saw Kubád released from bonds,

Glad and victorious, embraced him quickly

With joy and cursed the people of Haitál

And Chín. They passed within the royal palace

With hearts still sore and eager for revenge.

Balásh commanded and they spread the board,

And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy ;

But there was little gladness at that feast

Through sorrow for magnanimous Píruz.

The singers lauded Súfarai and sang

Upon the harp the war against Túrán.

He was the Cynosure of all the chieftains,

Who entertained high hopes and joyed in him.

The country rallied to him, those at least

That longed to take revenge on Khúshnawáz.

The hearts of all the paladins rejoiced

In Súfarai ; they freed their souls from care.

Thus was it till four years had passed away,

And he had not his equal in the world.

Naught happened but according to his will,  
And what he would he did. Now when his word  
Prevailed throughout the world he had Balásh  
Removed, albeit gently, from the throne,  
And said to him : “ Thou rulest not the realm ;  
Thou knowest not the good men from the bad ;  
Thou turnest all the empire to a jest  
Through thy perversity and carelessness.  
Kubád is wiser far than thou and hath  
Much more authority within the realm.”

Balásh withdrew to his own house, for he  
Dared not make answer : “ Get thee gone,” but said :—  
“ This throne will vex not when I sit thereon ;  
’Tis free from travail, pain, and malison.”

## XL

## KUBÁD SON OF PÍRÚZ

HE REIGNED FORTY-THREE YEARS

## ARGUMENT

Kubád ascends the throne and harangues the chiefs. Súfarai continues for a time at the head of affairs and then is disgraced and executed. The Írániāns revolt in consequence, hand Kubád over to Súfarai's son, Rizmihr, and make Kubád's brother, Jámásp, Sháh. Rizmihr acts with extreme loyalty, protects Kubád, and escapes with him to the Haitálians. On the way thither Kubád marries a thane's daughter who becomes the mother of Kisrá. Provided with an army by the king of the Haitálians Kubád regains the throne. He wars against Rúm, builds cities, and becomes a convert to the teaching of Mazdak who, however, is worsted in a public disputation by Kisrá and put to death with his followers. Kubád appoints Kisrá, to whom the folk give the name of Núshirwán, his successor and dies.

## NOTE

According to Mír Khánd, Kubád (Kobad, A.D. 488-531) was known as "the well-intentioned."<sup>1</sup> Historically the events of his

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<sup>1</sup> RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 371. The nickname may be illustrated by the following story from the Persian Tabarí. Kubád was engaged once in hunting at vintage-time and reached a village where he saw a very beautiful vine. Near by was a woman, engaged in baking bread, who had with her a child some three years old. Suddenly the child entered the garden where the vine was, picked a bunch of grapes, and was about to eat them. The woman slapped the child, took away the bunch, and refastened it to the vine. Kubád, astounded at her parsimony, approached the vine and asked the woman whose it was. She answered that it belonged to her. He then inquired whose the child was, and she told him that it was hers. Then he said: "Why have

reign, as set forth in the Sháhnáma, may be revised as follows. Súfarai remained at the head of affairs until the revolt occurred that drove the Sháh to take refuge with the Háiṭálians. This revolt was brought about by the conversion of Kubád to the doctrines of the heresiarch Mazdak, who had a large and increasing following. Kubád seems to have been sincere in his adoption of Mazdakism, but at the same time used its subversive principles as a means of reducing the power of, and of humbling, the great nobles. The official hierarchy, however, took alarm, Kubád was dethroned and shut up in the "Castle of Oblivion" in Susiana, and Jámasp, his brother, reigned in his stead. Kubád, however, by the help of his sister, wife, or both, or of Súfarai himself, managed to make good his escape to the Háiṭálians with whom he had stayed for some two years as a hostage during the lifetime of his father.<sup>1</sup> During his second sojourn among them he married his own niece—the offspring, by the Háiṭálian king, of the captive daughter of Pírúz.<sup>2</sup> Helped by his royal father-in-law Kubád managed to recover his throne and placed Súfarai again at the head of affairs, but at length, finding him too powerful, called in the aid of his rival—Shápiúr of Rai, the captain of the host—and had him put to death. Kubád never seems to have abandoned his personal regard for Mazdakism, in spite of the fact that it had cost him the temporary loss of his crown, until nearly the end of his long reign. Probably after his restoration he was content to hold it as a pious opinion only, no longer as a weapon to be used against the nobility or in a manner provocative of the Magi. The Mazdakites, however, not unnaturally became concerned about the future—what would happen on Kubád's death? Accordingly they

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you taken the bunch of grapes away from it, beaten it, and refused to your own child a paltry bunch." She replied: "We are not free to dispose of our own, for the Sháh has a share, and before some one comes on his behalf to deduct his portion we dare not put hand to it." Kubád said: "Do you only or do all folk act thus?" She answered: "Not I alone, but all in the realm of Kubád." The Sháh was full of pity for his subjects, narrated the story to his ministers, and bade them find a less oppressive way of raising revenue. They recommended that the whole realm should be surveyed and taxed in proportion to its fertility, remoteness, and distance from water. Then the revenue would be in money which could be demanded at any time. The Sháh gave orders accordingly, and the work was begun, but finding that it could not be completed in his own lifetime he charged his son and destined successor, Núshirwán, to see that it was carried through, which he did (p. 224 seq.).

—ZT, ii. 152 seq.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 161.

attempted to secure the succession for one of Kubád's sons whom they knew that they could trust. Kubád, however, had made up his mind already in favour of another heir, and a great massacre of Mazdakites ensued. This seems to have taken place at the end of A.D. 528 or the beginning of A.D. 529. Kisrá in consequence of the share that he took in exterminating the Communists received the name of Núshírwán.<sup>1</sup>

This account, from which all irrelevant history has been omitted, differs widely, as will be seen, from that given in the Sháhnáma: Mazdak and his evangel have been replaced in their proper historical context, the story of the birth of Kisrá has been omitted, and so has all reference to Rizmihr, Súfarai's son.

§§ 2 and 3. Tabarí tells us that when, at the instance of Kubád, Shápúr of Rai overthrew Súkhrá (Súfarai), a saying, which became a proverb, grew current and ran thus: "Súkhrá's wind is gone; now a wind has risen for Mihrán." Mihrán was the name of one of the great Arsacid families that played an important rôle, and held high office, in Sásánian times, and its employment in the above proverb has led Nöldeke to suspect that "Súkhrá" also must be the title of a family, not the name of an individual, as otherwise the two halves of the proverb would not have balanced properly. He is inclined therefore to the opinion that Súkhrá and Zarmihr—the Rizmihr of Firdausí—were not two individuals standing in the relation of father and son to each other, but one and the same person—Zarmihr of the family of Súkhrá of the house of Káran.<sup>2</sup> This house, like that of Mihrán, was probably of Arsacid descent, but in Iránian tradition, as we learn from the Sháhnáma, claimed a much older origin and looked upon Káwa, the smith, who raised the standard of revolt against the tyranny of Zahhák, as the founder of its fortunes.<sup>3</sup> However this may be, the rivalry between two great families, and the employment by the Sháh of one of them to deliver himself from the overgrown authority of the other would be natural enough. It is to be noted that Shápúr of Rai is described in the poem as being descended from Mihrak—the mortal enemy of Ardshír Pápakán and evidently for some reason or other a very important personage in Iránian legend. He is said to have been of Jahram in Párs, while Rai, with which his descendant Shápúr is associated, was the centre of Arsacid power in popular tradition.<sup>4</sup> Not very long ago we had a Mihrán as treasurer to Yazdagird son

<sup>1</sup> MM, ii. 196. Cf. p. 211 and note.

<sup>2</sup> NT, pp. 120 note, 140 and note.

Vol. vi. pp. 201, 237, 241, 256, 266 seq.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. i. p. 154 seq.

of Shápur,<sup>1</sup> quite lately we found another—Ruhhám—helping Píriz in his struggle against his brother Hurmuz,<sup>2</sup> presently we shall come upon a third as the opponent of Belisarius,<sup>3</sup> a fourth as a general in Núshírwán's host,<sup>4</sup> while a fifth—Mihrán Sitád—goes on a mission to the Khán.<sup>5</sup>

In Kubád's plans for escape to the Haitálians he associates himself with six others. Seven is a favourite number in Persian story. We have the Seven Climes, the Seven Courses or Stages of Rustam and Asfandiyár, the Fight of the Seven Warriors, the Seven Feasts of Núshírwán, and other instances.<sup>6</sup>

§ 4. According to Tabarí, Kubád fled twice to the Haitálians, once on the occasion of his unhistorical contention with Balásh<sup>7</sup> and again, historically, here. On both occasions he is said to have contracted a marriage on his journey and to have been accompanied by Zarmihr (Rizmihr). This is stated by Tabarí with regard to the first flight and by Dínawarí and Firdausí as to the second.<sup>8</sup>

§ 5. In the above accounts the birth of Kisrá is chronicled in connection with both flights. This duplication does not make the story any the more probable, and, as a matter of fact, Kisrá appears to have been the son of the sister of one of Kubád's generals who served in the Roman war, A.D. 502–506.<sup>9</sup> In view of the subsequent importance of Kisrá it was incumbent that Kubád should ask and receive satisfactory assurances as to the descent of the mother of his son. The name Kisrá is the Arabic form of the Persian Khusrau which, with the exception of twelve years, was the name of the Sháhs from A.D. 531 to A.D. 627, if we leave out of account the usurper Bahram Chubína.

Jámásp who, according to Mír Khánd, was known as “the proud,”<sup>10</sup> appears to have reigned for two years, A.D. 496–498, and it is to be feared that his brother's treatment of him after his deposition was not so amiable as Firdausí would have us believe. The same remark would apply to Jámásp's adherents, whom also the poet tells us were pardoned. One account at all events states that Kubád “killed the Great” when he regained the throne.<sup>11</sup>

According to Tabarí, Zarmihr (Rizmihr) was put to death by Kubád some time after his restoration.<sup>12</sup> The story of the Sháh's ingratitude to the father is duplicated in the case of the son, which

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> p. 251. Cf. NT, p. 139 note.

<sup>5</sup> p. 350.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> NT, pp. 135, 145 and note.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* and cf. p. 187.

<sup>10</sup> RM, Pt. I, vol. ii. p. 371.

<sup>11</sup> NT., p. 461 and note.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* p. 142.

in itself is suspicious, as is the almost superhuman loyalty displayed by the latter in § 3. It may be laid to the account of the legitimist view that obtains in this part of the poem.<sup>1</sup> If Súfarai be the Persian commander-in-chief called Seoses in Procopius he was not put to death till about A.D. 519.<sup>2</sup>

Until war broke out in A.D. 502 there had been, with one slight exception in the reign of Yazdagird son of Bahram Gür,<sup>3</sup> a period of peace for eighty years between the Persian and Eastern Roman Empires. To both the defence of the passes in the Caucasus against the incursions of northern Barbarians was equally important, and the understanding was that both should contribute equally to that end. This arrangement formed one of the terms of the peace concluded by Yazdagird with the younger Theodosius after the brief war, above mentioned, in A.D. 422. The Romans, however, were very remiss in carrying out their part of the undertaking, and their money contribution was in arrear. Both parties seem to have been inclined to look upon the money as tribute to be exacted or refused according to circumstances, and this added to the difficulty of an agreement which probably is responsible for the notion often found in Iránian legend that Rúm was tributary to Irán. Kubád, after his restoration, found himself in want of money to pay his Haitálían allies and applied to the Emperor Anastasius for the arrears due for the defence of the passes. Anastasius refused, his motive being, it is said, the hope of embroiling Kubád with his northern mercenaries, and the Sháh declared war. At first he was very successful, taking Theodosiopolis in Roman Armenia and Amida in northern Mesopotamia, but the generals whom he left to carry on the war, when he himself was called off to resist an Haitálían invasion, were less successful, and Kubád commissioned his brother-in-law, the uncle of Kisrá, to negotiate a peace.<sup>4</sup> The Persians received a lump sum and gave up the captured cities. Towards the end of Kubád's reign war again broke out, A.D. 526, and lasted till his death. It was in this war that Belisarius rose to fame and fought twice with one of the Mihráns named Pírúz.<sup>5</sup> Procopius, who had become secretary to Belisarius in A.D. 527, gives a correspondence purporting to have passed between the two generals.<sup>6</sup>

Hulwán was situated north-west of Kirmánsháh at Sar-i-pul-i-Zohab.<sup>7</sup> Kubád merely renamed it as he also renamed a town

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 145 note.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> NT, p. 145 note; RSM, p. 360 and note.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> RSM, p. 368 seq. and note.

<sup>7</sup> Id. 564 note; NT, p. 138 and note.

called Aragán on the borders of Ahwáz and Párs not far from the present Bihbihán. He changed Aragán to Rámkubád.<sup>1</sup>

§§ 6 and 7. In the Vendídád there is a reference to "the ungodly fasting Ashemaotha" (heretic), to which the Pahlaví commentary on the Zandavasta adds: "like Mazdak, son of Bámdát."<sup>2</sup> In the late Pahlaví Text known as the Bahman Yasht the names are given of six priests whom Núshírwán summoned to his aid in his disputation with Mazdak.<sup>3</sup> Two of them are recognisable in Firdausí's Hurnuz and Mihr-Ázar. Mazdak's place of birth is quite uncertain, and his historical importance began and ended with the reign of Kubád. The poet omits to mention two of Mazdak's principles—the prohibition of bloodshed and of flesh-eating—but in other respects his account of that heresiarch's doctrines seems to be substantially correct—Zoroastrianism with private property and the family abolished. To this anarchical Faith doubtlessly he did his best to win over Kubád's recognised heir, failing in which he schemed to alter the succession and perished in the attempt. This seems to be the obvious explanation of the catastrophe. Mání and his followers in their time fared no better.<sup>4</sup> Núshírwán was far too able and practical to be led away by Mazdak, and on coming to the throne tried his best to repair the mischief that had been done.<sup>5</sup>

## § I

### *How Kubád sat upon the Throne and made an Oration to the Íránians*

C. 1603 When glorious Kubád sat on the throne,  
And donned the crown of majesty, he went  
To Taisafún, departing from Istakhr—  
The glory of the great. Now when he sat  
Upon Píruz's<sup>6</sup> seat he said: "Conceal  
Naught from me. By bright day and darksome night

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* 13 and *note*, 146.

<sup>2</sup> DZA, i. 48 and *note*.

<sup>3</sup> WPT, i. 194.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 359; NT, 465.

<sup>5</sup> NT, p. 163. For Mazdak and the Mazdakites generally see *id.* p. 455 *seq.*

<sup>6</sup> Or "victorious" or, with a slight change of reading (P), "turquoise," but the translation given is most in accord to the legitimist tendency in this part of the Sháhnáma. Cf. Vol. vi. p. 251.

The way to me is open unto you.  
 The man is great who ordereth his tongue  
 To right discourse and seeketh not deceit,  
 While since he will be merciful in wrath  
 The best of men will welcome him as guide.  
 He setteth up the throne of acceptance  
 Within the world, receiving from the great  
 Just commendation. If thou keep'st thy heart  
 Far from revenge both great and small will praise  
 thee,  
 But when the great king is a double-dealer  
 His double-dealing is a call to strife.  
 First hear a matter through for thus apprised  
 Thou wilt reply aright. When any sage  
 Is covetous his knowledge will not fruit ;  
 When he is headstrong it will be to him  
 Like water in a salt marsh. Furthermore  
 'Tis well to get a soldier's heart and bear  
 Reproach submissively.<sup>1</sup> The rich, hard man  
 Is lower even than a mendicant ;  
 But when a foolish mendicant hath sway  
 His rule is simple madness. He that knoweth  
 His own defects will not be eloquent  
 On those of others. Patience is the pillar  
 Of wisdom : to be wroth is but to make  
 Oneself despised. Submission to God's justice  
 Will make thee rich, sincere, and honourable,  
 For thou art freed from care. The body of him  
 That hath no greed is better than a treasure,  
 While that man whose viaticum is knowledge  
 Will die in person but in name live ever ;  
 So put ye all your hands to good alone,  
 And walk not on this whirling world for ill."

<sup>1</sup> Mohl, with a very slight change of reading, translates : " Celui qui recherche l'affection de l'armée prend un ton modeste, même en blâmant." Cf. p. 44.

The nobles all called blessings down on him,  
And showered emeralds upon his crown.  
He was a youth of sixteen years, and bore  
As yet but little part in government,  
While Súfarai took order for the world.

C. 1604

Kubád ruled in the palace ; all affairs  
Were managed wholly by the paladin.  
He suffered no one to approach the Sháh,  
Who had no archmage and gave no command  
Or counsel. Súfarai ruled all the land.

## § 2

*How Súfarai went to Shíráz, how the Iránians slandered him to Kubád, and how Kubád slew him*

Thus in the cup the wine was tulip-like  
Until Kubád was twenty-one<sup>1</sup> years old ;  
Then Súfarai came in before the king  
For licence to go home and thereupon  
He gat him ready with his retinue,  
Struck up the drums, and started for Shíráz,  
Returning to his country, full of joy,  
As one that had obtained his whole desire.  
All Párs was as it were a slave before him,  
And, save the throne of empire, all was his.  
His thoughts were these : “ I have set up the Sháh,  
And done him homage as my sovereign,  
So now if any man shall slander me  
He will rebuke that man and banish him.”

He levied tribute on the provinces,  
On all the men of name and all the chiefs.  
When tidings of his just and unjust deeds  
Came from Shíráz to glorious Kubád,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

The people said : “The Sháh hath but the crown,  
And not the troops and treasure in Írán,  
Hath no authority, is not consulted ;  
The world is all the slave of Súfarai.”

All those that shared the secrets of Kubád  
Repeated to him what the people said,  
And added : “Why, exalted king ! art thou  
Contented merely to be king in name ?  
His treasury is better filled than thine :  
Thou shouldst release the world from his oppression.  
All Párs hath grown as 'twere a slave to him,  
The great men have become his thralls.”

These words  
Seduced Kubád's <sup>1</sup> heart, which became forgetful  
Of all the services of Súfarai ;  
He said : “If I shall send an army forth  
He will revolt and seek to be avenged,  
I shall but use my wealth to make a foe,  
While he will cause much trouble and much toil.  
The people all are talking of his deeds,  
Unwitting of his secret purposes.  
I know not any warrior of Írán  
To march against him with a host to battle.”

A wise man answered thus : “Think not that he  
E'er will be recognised as king. Thou hast  
Both lieges and a leader of the host  
That can lay hand upon the circling sky ;  
So when Shápúr of Rai is on the march  
The heart of wicked Súfarai will rive.”

The Sháh took courage when he heard these words,  
Forgot the merit and presumed the guilt ;  
Then bade a veteran mount as swift as wind,  
And, on the plea of faring forth to hawk,  
Go to Shápúr of Rai, cause him to mount  
Forthwith upon his steed, and summon him

C. 1605

<sup>1</sup> See p. 179, note.

From Rai to court. The messenger, who took  
A spare steed, went swift as an autumn-blast  
To Rai as he was bidden by the king.

The chamberlain there saw and questioned him,  
Took the king's letter, went before Shápúr,  
Gave it, and introduced that noble horseman.  
Shápúr, who was descended from Mihrak,  
Smiled when he read the letter of Kubád,<sup>1</sup>  
For Súfarai had not a foe like him  
In public and in private. Thus apprised  
Shápúr convoked his lieges and led forth  
His army in all haste to Taisafún.

When he had brought his army to the Sháh  
They gave him audience instantly. The world-lord,  
On seeing him, received him graciously,  
Caused him to sit upon the turquoise throne,  
And said : " I have no portion in this crown,  
Am noted 'mongst the foolish in the world.  
All power is with Súfarai ; I see  
But sovereignty in name. Late in the day  
My body shrinketh from the weights that press  
With justice or injustice on my neck.  
E'en were my brother master of Irán  
Twere better than this unjust Súfarai."

Shápúr replied : " O king ! be not aggrieved  
At heart on this account. Thou shouldest write  
A letter in harsh terms to him, for thou  
Hast Grace and fame, high lineage and support.  
Say : ' Of the crown of king of kings my share  
Is travail and an empty treasure-house.  
Thou takest tribute, and I bear the blame.  
I will not have thee call me Sháh henceforth.  
Lo ! I have sent to thee a paladin  
In that thy conduct causeth me to wail.'  
When he shall get a letter thus conceived,

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*

And I am there with troops prepared for fight,  
I will not leave him time to wink an eye,  
Or speak a word to him unless in wrath."

They called to them a scribe and seated him  
Before Shápúr, who said again the words  
As spoken in the presence of the Sháh :  
The writer wrote them, grieving secretly.

Shápúr, whenas the Sháh had sealed the letter,  
Led forth his host, then added famous chiefs,  
**Disbanded from the armies of the king,**  
And with those nobles eager for the fray  
Set face toward the city of Shíráz.

When Súfarai had tidings of the matter  
He marched at once, and with a mighty host—  
Picked cavaliers in mail—went out to meet  
Shápúr. They met, and those two haughty chiefs  
Alighted from their steeds. Now when Shápúr  
Sat down with Súfarai they talked at large  
Of projects good and ill. Shápúr then gave  
The letter of the king, and matters reached  
A cruel, shameful pass ; the paladin,  
When he had read the letter, changed his favour,  
Was stunned and dark of soul. Then said Shápúr,  
The letter being read : "I must be plain :  
The world-lord ordered that thou shouldst be  
bound,  
Complaining much of thee before the nobles,  
And thou wilt gather, having read his letter,  
That he is resolute."

#### The paladin

Replied : "The monarch of the world is ware  
What toil and hardship I have borne for him,  
That marching from Zábulistán with troops  
I set him free from bondage by my valour,  
And suffered no calamity to come  
Upon him. I had influence with the Sháh,

C. 1606

And with the chieftains of the Iránian host,  
 But since bonds are to be my recompense,  
 And my resistance will be troublesome  
 To thee, I ask no respite. Bind my feet :  
 The fetters of Kubád will profit me.  
 Doth he not shame before God and the host,  
 For I shed freely my warm blood for him ?  
 What time the Sháh was in captivity  
 I swore by God a mighty oath, and said :—  
 ‘ My hand shall look but on my falchion’s hilt,  
 And I will cloud the sun in fight, till I  
 Shall give my head or bring down from the throne  
 The head of Khúshnawáz between the shears.’  
 And now he biddeth me be bound ! Is’t right ?  
 Receive I but derogatory words ?  
 Still turn not aught from his commands, for know  
 That bonds but ornament a hero’s feet.”

Shápúr, on hearing this, made fast the fetters,  
 Then bade the trumpet sound and gat to horse.  
 From Párs he carried Súfarai before  
 Kubád, who thought not of past services,  
 But bade men bear him to the prison-house,  
 Near where the madmen were, and gave command  
 To carry from Shíráz to Taisafún  
 What wealth soever he possessed—his folk,  
 His treasures, and the produce of his fields—  
 By those appointed to the treasurer.

C. 1607 Now when a week had passed Kubád consulted  
 The archmages how to deal with Súfarai,  
 And thus a counsellor addressed the Sháh :—  
 “ The whole of Taisafún is on his side—  
 Troops, courtiers, thanes, and populace alike.  
 If he abideth in Irán unscathed  
 Thou mayest wash thy hands of sovereignty.  
 The foeman of the Sháh is best when killed,  
 His hater’s fortune best when overturned.”

Now when the Sháh had heard the archmage's  
counsel  
He took a new course and despised the old,  
Gave his command that Súfarai be slain,  
The hearts of all his kindred wrung with pain.

## § 3

*How the Iránians put Kubád in Bonds and committed him to Rizmihr, the Son of Súfarai, and how Jámásp, the Brother of Kubád, was set upon the Throne*

Now when these tidings reached the Iránians :—  
“ He of the elephantine form is dead,”  
A cry of anguish went up from Irán,  
Men, women, children, all alike bewailed ;  
The tongue of every one was steeped in curses,  
And secret thoughts found public utterance.  
Irán was all convulsed, the dust went up,  
While all folk made them ready for the fight,  
And thus they said : “ Since Súfarai is gone  
Let not Kubád's throne be within Irán.”

The soldiers and the citizens agreed,  
They would not bear the mention of Kubád,  
But marched upon the palace of the Sháh,  
Vexed at his ill advisers, for redress.  
These men—all malice and intent on evil—  
They took, dragged from the palace, and then sought  
With diligence for traces of Jámásp,  
His younger brother and a noble youth,  
One whom Kubád had cherished tenderly.  
They chose him, seated him upon the throne,  
And called down blessings on him as their Sháh ;  
But made Kubád's feet fast in iron fetters,  
Unheedful of his Grace and noble birth.

Now Súfarai had one son well beloved,  
 A wise man, holy and illustrious,  
 A youth without offence, Rizmihr by name,  
 Whose fame had made his father well content.  
 To him the people gave Kubád in bonds,  
 As unto some malicious enemy,  
 And thought : “ Through grief the loving son will take  
 Revenge upon the king for Súfarai.”

The good Rizmihr, the worshipper of God,  
 Laid not his hand for ill upon the world-lord,<sup>1</sup>

C. 1608      But did obeisance to Kubád and spake  
 No words to him about his evil deeds,  
 Whereat the world-lord marvelled much, began  
 To bless Rizmihr, and thus excused himself :—  
 “ My foes have troubled much my star and moon,  
 But, if I find deliverance from bond,  
 I will reward thee for all ills endured,  
 For I will banish anguish from thy heart,  
 And cause the eyes that look on thee to shine.”

Rizmihr made answer to him thus : “ O king !  
 Let not thy soul be grieved on this account,  
 For when a father acted not aright  
 His son should bear the sorrow of his death.  
 As touching mine own self, I am thy slave ;  
 I stand before thee as a servitor,  
 And at thy bidding I will swear that never  
 Will I break off my fealty to thee.”

So spake Rizmihr and as the monarch heard  
 His heart began to throb for very joy,  
 His soul regained its confidence and grew  
 Right joyful at the words of that wise man.  
 He made Rizmihr his confidant and said :—  
 “ I will not hide my thoughts from thee. Five men  
 Are sharers in my secrets. None besides  
 Hath listened to my voice. Now we will summon

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 187.

These five and ope to them our secret plan  
 If it appears that we have need of them,  
 While if from fetters thou shalt set me free  
 Know this—my policy shall profit thee.”

## § 4

*How Kubád escaped from Ward with Rizmihr, how he wedded the Daughter of a Thane, and how he took Refuge with the Haitálians*

The good Rizmihr, on hearing this, anon  
 Released Kubád from fetters. From the city  
 They fared forth to the plain by night, unseen  
 By foes, and made toward the Haitálians,  
 Wrung with anxiety and hurrying.  
 On this wise sped the seven like flying dust  
 Until with dizzy heads they reached Ahwáz,  
 And entered on their steeds that wealthy town—  
 A town wherein a famous chieftain dwelt.  
 Dismounting at the dwelling of the thane  
 They tarried there and breathed themselves awhile.  
 He had a daughter moonlike, crowned with musk,  
 And, when Kubád beheld her face, all wisdom  
 Fled from his youthful brain. He went forthwith,  
 And told Rizmihr : “ I have a privy word  
 For thee. Haste to the thane. Tell him from me :— C. 1609  
 ‘ This moon-faced damsel—could she be my wife ? ’ ”

Rizmihr went instantly, informed the thane,  
 And said : “ If thy fair daughter is unmated  
 I will provide her with a noble spouse,  
 And thou shalt be the master of Ahwáz.”  
 The illustrious thane made answer to Rizmihr :—  
 “ My pretty daughter hath no husband yet,  
 And, if she please thee, she is thine to give :  
 Give her to him that longeth after her.”

The wise Rizmihr came to Kubád and said :—  
 “ May this Moon bring good fortune to the Sháh.  
 Thou sawest her unawares and didst approve,  
 Thou didst approve of her just as she was.”

Kubád then called to him that fairy-faced ;  
 The gallant warrior set her on his knee,  
 And having with him one, and but one, ring—  
 A signet-ring whose worth was known to none—  
 He gave it to her, saying : “ Keep this signet ;  
 The day will come when I shall ask for it.”

He stayed a se’nnight for that fair Moon’s sake,  
 And parted on the eighth day with the dawn,  
 Went to the king of the Haitálians,  
 Told what had chanced, the Iránians’ deeds, and how  
 They all had girded up their loins for ill.  
 The king replied : “ The wrongs of Khúshnawáz  
 Have surely brought thee to this strait to-day.  
 On these conditions will I give thee troops,  
 Who are crown-wearers, every one of them,  
 That if thou shalt recover crown and treasure,  
 Chaghán, its wealth and state, its march and rule,  
 Shall be all mine, and thou shalt keep my terms  
 And stipulations.”

Said Kubád while smiling  
 At him who thus dictated terms : “ I never  
 Will give that land a thought and, when thou wishest,  
 Will send thee troops in numbers numberless.  
 What is Chaghán that I should look that way ? ”

When they had made their pact the Haitalian king  
 Unlocked his treasury and gave Kubád  
 Dínárs and arms, and two score thousand swordsmen,  
 All famed as warriors and cavaliers.  
 Thus to Ahwáz from the Haitálians went  
 Kubád ; the whole world rang with that event.

## § 5

*How Kubád returned from Haitál to Írán, how he had Tidings  
of the Birth of his Son, Núshírwán, and reascended the  
Throne*

Kubád approached the thane's abode and saw  
In every street a scattered populace,  
Who all apprised him of the joyful news :—  
“ Thy spouse brought forth a son to thee last night      C. 1610  
But little less resplendent than the moon,  
And may he bring good fortune to the Sháh.”

Kubád, on hearing, went within the house  
In great content. They named the boy Kisrá.  
Now afterwards Kubád asked of the thane :—  
“ From whom art thou descended, noble sir ? ”

He said : “ From valiant Farídún who took  
The kingship from the kindred of Zahhák :  
Thus said my father and my mother too :—  
‘ We give our reverence to Farídún.’ ”

Kubád was pleased yet more at the words,  
And instantly resumed the royal crown.  
He had a litter brought and, when his spouse  
Was seated there, departed on his march ;  
He led the army on to Taisafún  
In high displeasure with the Írániens.

Now in Írán the while the ancient chiefs  
Sat with the sages and the notables.  
They said : “ Between these two—both Sháhs and  
proud—

The matter will prove wearisome for us.  
Hosts are upon their way from Rúm and Chín,  
And they will cause much bloodshed in the land.”

Then one of that assembly said : “ Ye chiefs,  
Exalted and heroic warriors !  
‘ Tis needful that we go out to Kubád,

Who, it may be, will not recall the past,  
 And bring to him Jámásp, the ten years' child,  
 To turn the hailstones of his wrath to pearls ;  
 So haply we may swerve aside and 'scape  
 From pillaging, from bloodshed, and from war.”

All went to meet Kubád and said to him :—  
 “ O Sháh of royal race ! if thou hast hurt  
 Men's hearts, and they have washed their hearts and  
 eyes

In petulance, now act as pleaseth thee  
 Because the world-lord ruleth o'er the world.”

They all drew near to him in haste, afoot,  
 Dust-covered, and with gloomy souls. The Sháh  
 Forgave the evil doings of his lords,  
 Accepting their excuse in lieu of bloodshed ;  
 He pardoned too Jámásp : the nobles blessed him.  
 He came and sat upon the royal throne :  
 Jámásp became his liege. Kubád bestowed  
 The conduct of the realm upon Rizmihr,  
 And gave him great advancement. By his means  
 The kingship was well ordered, and the world  
 Fulfilled with justice and prosperity.

Thus matters fared until Kisrá grew tall—  
 A stripling bold and lusty. Then Kubád  
 Entrusted to wise governors his son,  
 That fresh and fruitful Bough. Kubád directed  
 All matters in Írán and in Túrán,  
 And raised his crown of greatness to the sky.  
 Thereafter he led forth his host to Rúm,  
 Which proved as 'twere a lump of wax to him :  
 He made a thorn-brake of those fields and fells.  
 Two cities asked for quarter at his hands,  
 One Hindfyá, the other Fárikín.  
 He taught the Zandavasta there, established  
 The Faith, and instituted Fanes of Fire,  
 His power, the feasts of New Year's Day and Sada.

He fixed his royal seat at Madá'in,  
 And wrought much good and ill. He built a city  
 Betwixt Ahwáz and Párs, and founded too  
 A hospital. He called the city's name  
 Arash ; the Arabs call it now Hulwán.  
 They opened everywhere canals that flowed  
 A-brim, and peace and rest on earth abode.

## § 6

*The Story of Kubád and Mazdak, and how Kubád  
 adopted the Faith of Mazdak*

Then there arose a man by name Mazdak,  
 Learned, eloquent, judicious, and commanding,  
 Of noble birth, a trafficker in knowledge,  
 And brave Kubád gave ear to him. This man  
 Became the king of kings' chief minister,  
 The treasurer and the guardian of the treasure.  
 Then famine visited the world through drought,  
 A famine that afflicted great and small ;  
 No sign of snow appeared upon the sky,  
 And none saw snow or rain-fall in Frán.  
 At length the nobles of the world begged bread  
 And water at the portal of Kubád.  
 Mazdak returned them this reply : "The Sháh  
 Will manifest to you a way of hope,"  
 Then came himself in haste before the king,  
 And said to him : "O upright Sháh ! I fain  
 Would question thee upon a point if thou  
 Wilt condescend to answer."

## Eloquent

Kubád replied : "Say on and make my lustre  
 Fresh in the world."

"A man," Mazdak rejoined,  
 "Is bitten by a snake ; his life is passing ;

Another man hath got the antidote  
 Whereof the bitten can obtain no share.  
 What then should be the guerdon of the man  
 That hath it ? Money will not purchase it."

The Sháh replied : " He is a murderer,  
 And should be slain to avenge the other's blood  
 Before my gate whenever the pursuer  
 Shall take him."

Hearing this Mazdak went forth  
 To those petitioners and told them thus :—  
 " I have discussed the matter with the Sháh.  
 Wait till the dawn, and I will show you how  
 To right yourselves."

C. 1612 They went away, returning  
 At dawn with stricken hearts in deep affliction.  
 Mazdak, when he beheld those chiefs from far,  
 Ran from the portal to the Sháh and said :—  
 " O thou victorious Sháh and eloquent,  
 Unsleeping, and the glory of the throne !  
 Thou gavest me an answer, when I spake,  
 And by that answer oped my bolted door,  
 So now with thy permission I will speak  
 A word to guide thee."

" Speak," the Sháh replied,  
 " Lock not thy lips because thy words will help me."

Mazdak said : " Noble king ! suppose a man,  
 Whom thou hast bound, but they withhold from him  
 All food until he dieth, thus perforce  
 Surrendering sweet life. Now how should one  
 Be punished who had bread yet left that captive  
 In destitution ? Will the great king say :—  
 ' This man was wise and holy ? ' "

Said the Sháh :—  
 " Rend such to pieces, for through his neglect  
 He is a murderer."

On hearing this

Mazdak, when he had kissed the ground, went forth.  
 And from the portal thus harangued the crowd :—  
 “ Go to the magazines where grain is stored,  
 And help yourselves while if the owners ask  
 Its value give them gold.”

His own possessions

Within that city he gave up to pillage  
 In order that all folk might have their share.  
 Then all the hungry rabble fared in haste  
 To plunder every magazine of corn,  
 Owned by the citizens or by Kubád,  
 Who had none left to bless themselves withal.  
 The officers, when they perceived this, went  
 Before the watchful world-lord and thus said :—  
 “ The mob have sacked the Sháh’s own granaries,  
 But all the fault recoileth on Mazdak.”

Kubád bade call that man of eloquence,  
 And talked with him about the pillaging.  
 Mazdak replied : “ Mayst thou be fortunate,  
 And may thy words be wisdom’s daily food.  
 I only told the wretched market-folk  
 The words which I had heard the monarch speak.  
 I asked the Sháh about the snake and poison,  
 And of the man who had the antidote.  
 The Sháh returned this answer to his servant  
 Concerning him that had and him that sought it :—  
 ‘ If any die of snake-bite in the city,  
 Unhelped by one who hath the remedy,  
 For such they shall require that niggard’s blood.’  
 The Sháh’s authority must not be slighted.  
 Bread is the antidote for hungry men—  
 An antidote not wanted by the full.  
 If thou art one that judgest right, O Sháh !  
 Shall not the corn in store be put to use ?  
 To hunger have a multitude succumbed,  
 Whose deaths are due to idle granaries.”

Kubád was much affected by the words :  
 These righteous words aroused his brain to action.  
 Then, questioning Mazdak and hearing him,  
 The Sháh perceived him learned in heart and brain  
 In all things that the prophets, the archmages—  
 Those righteous dealers—and the great had spoken.  
 The teaching of Mazdak perverted him,  
 And exercised unbounded influence.  
 The multitude came thronging to Mazdak—  
 The many that had wandered from the way :  
 He said to them : “The man of empty hand  
 Is equal to the man possessed of wealth.  
 No one should have a superfluity,  
 The wealthy is the warp, the poor the woof ;  
 To right the world all men must have sufficient ;  
 The rich man’s plenty is abominable ;  
 The women, goods, and houses are for all ;  
 The empty-handed and the rich are one.  
 I will take order that the holy Faith  
 Be manifest, the lofty from the low.  
 Whoever is of other Faith than this,  
 The malison of God is on that dív.”

He treated mendicants, both old and young,  
 As though they were the equals of himself,  
 He took from this man and bestowed on that ;  
 The archmages were astonished at his doings.  
 Kubád himself gave ear and was converted,  
 And of all things was joyful in his words.  
 He set Mazdak at his right hand although  
 An archimage unknown to all the host,  
 And unto him the mendicants resorted  
 With those that earned a living by their toil ;  
 His Faith began to flourish in the world,  
 And no one dared to seek revenge on him,  
 The rich renounced the things that made them glad,  
 And gave to mendicants what wealth they had.

## § 7

*How Núshirwán rejected the Faith of Mazdak and slew  
him and his Followers*

It happened that Mazdak at dawn one day  
Went from his house and came before the Sháh,  
And thus he said : “ Of those that hold our Faith,  
As well as of our lieges pure of heart,  
A crowd of chiefs are at the door ; shall I  
Admit them or shall they depart ? ”

Kubád,  
On hearing, bade the chamberlain admit them,  
Whereat Mazdak said to the noble Sháh :—  
“ This house is narrow and the crowd is great,  
In sooth the audience-hall will hold them not ;      C. 1614  
Let the Sháh go and see them on the plain.”

Kubád commanded that his throne be brought,  
Brought from the royal palace to the waste,  
And there a hundred thousand Mazdakis  
Proceeded joyfully before the Sháh,  
And thus Mazdak addressed the king of earth :—  
“ O thou above all knowledge and acclaim !  
Know that Kisrá accepteth not our Faith,  
But is it fit that he should turn therefrom ?  
We must obtain from him an undertaking  
In writing to give up his evil course.  
There are five things that turn men from the right,  
And e'en the sage can add no sixth. Now these  
Are anger, vengeance, jealousy, and need ;  
The fifth is greed, which is predominant,  
And if thou conquer these five dívs the way  
Of God will be made manifest to thee.  
From these five things it cometh that our women  
And wealth work havoc with the good religion,  
But will not meddle more if thou wilt keep it

Intact. The twain cause jealousy, greed, need,  
While anger and revenge conspire with them,  
And thus the Dív perverteth wise men's heads :  
The twain should be a common property."

This spoken, by the hand he grasped Kisrá,  
What while the Sháh looked on in wonderment.  
The noble prince in wrath withdrew his hand,  
And turned his eyes in anger from Mazdak,  
To whom Kubád said smiling : " Why art thou  
Concerned for the religion of Kisrá ? "

Mazdak rejoined : " The way of righteousness  
Is not in him. He is not of our Faith."

The Sháh then questioned of Kisrá and said :—  
" What way is there except the good religion ? "

Kisrá replied : " If I shall have the time  
Allowed me I will prove this theory false.  
When both the fraud and falsehood shall appear  
My truth will show out more conspicuously."

Mazdak rejoined : " Thou askest of the Sháh—  
The lustre of the world—how many days ? "

He said : " I ask a period of five months.  
The Sháh shall have his answer in the sixth  
On all points."

They agreed and so departed.  
The exalted Sháh returned to his own palace.  
Kisrá dispatched a man to every quarter  
To look for sages and auxiliaries.  
An envoy went to Khurra-i-Ardshír  
To cause the old Hurmuzd to come to court,  
While from Istakhr came Mihr-Ázar of Párs  
With thirty friends. These seekers after knowledge  
Held session and discussed the case at large,  
And then these men of lore and ancient sages  
Presented their conclusions to Kisrá,  
While he, when he had heard, went to Kubád,  
Discoursed with him about Mazdak, and said :—

“ The time now hath arrived when I would make  
 Investigation of the good religion.  
 If then Mazdak be right, and if the Faith  
 Delivered by Zarduhsh shall prove in fault,  
 I will accept the true Faith of Mazdak,  
 And make my soul’s choice his,<sup>1</sup> for when the way  
 Of Farídún, of Esdras, and of Christ,  
 And all the Zandavasta, shall prove wrong,  
 And when the doctrine of Mazdak shall stand,  
 The world must take him for its only guide.  
 If, on the other hand, his words are false,  
 And he ensueth not God’s holy way,  
 Then turn thee from the pathway of his Faith,  
 Put far from thee this sorry Creed of his,  
 And give him with his followers to me ;  
 God grant that none of them keep brain and skin.”

He took as witnesses Rizmihr, Kharrád,  
 Bihzád, Bandwí, and Fara’in, and thence  
 Departed to his palace and observed  
 The righteous covenant that he had made.  
 At dawn, what time the sun displayed its crown,  
 And earth was like a sea of ivory,  
 The world-king’s son, that man of eloquence,  
 Set forth with chieftains and with archimages.  
 They went together to the royal palace.  
 Their speech was fluent and their quest the Way.  
 That youth—the Joy of hearts—came to Kubád,  
 And oped the case, whereon an archimage  
 Addressed Mazdak before the throng and said :—  
 “ O seeker after wisdom ! thou hast framed  
 A new religion in the world and made  
 Community of women and of goods.  
 How will a father recognise his son,  
 The son in like wise recognise his father ?  
 When every man is equal in the world,

<sup>1</sup> “ j’arracherai de mon âme cette ortie ” (Mohl).

And great and little are no more discerned,  
 Who then will serve, and how can any rule ?<sup>1</sup>  
 Who then will labour for us, thee and me,  
 And how shall good men be discerned from bad ?  
 When one shall die to whom will appertain  
 His house and goods when toiling slave and Sháh  
 Are equal ? This will desolate the world ;  
 Such evil must not come upon Frán.  
 When all are masters who will be the servant ?  
 When all have treasure who be treasurer ?  
 None of the leaders of the Faith speake thus,  
 And thou art mad although thou hidest it.  
 Thou leadest all mankind to Hell, and thou  
 Accountest not all evil-doing wrong.”

Kubád, when he had heard the archmage’s words,  
 Was wroth and then gave sentence on the case.  
 The illustrious Kisrá supported him,  
 The impious one grew full of fear at heart,  
 While all the people there assembled cried :—  
 “ Let not Mazdak remain before the Sháh ;  
 He hath made havoc of the Faith of God ;  
 Let him not tarry at this famous court.”

The Sháh became abhorrent from that Faith,  
 The heads of all its chiefs grew full of care.  
 He gave up to Kisrá Mazdak forthwith  
 With all that held that doctrine and that way—  
 As many as three thousand men of name.  
 The king at that time thus addressed his son :—  
 “ Do with those chiefs as seemeth good to thee,  
 And henceforth mention not Mazdak.”

### Kisrá

Had at his court a pleasure-ground whose wall  
 Was higher than a crow could fly. Around  
 The circuit of that wall he dug a trench  
 Wherin he set those men at intervals.

<sup>1</sup> For an exemplification of this see p. 26 seq.

They planted them like trees and firmly fixed  
 Their feet aloft, their heads below. Kisrá  
 Addressed Mazdak on this wise : “ Visit thou  
 The entrance of my noble garth. The seed  
 That thou hast scattered all this while hath brought  
 Fruit forth to thee, O thou insensate one !  
 Thou shalt see trees such as none e'er beheld,  
 Or heard described by shrewd men heretofore.”

Mazdak went, oped the portal of the garden,  
 And thought maybe to see fruit-bearing trees,  
 But seeing what he did he gave a cry,  
 And then all consciousness abandoned him.  
 Kisrá gave orders for a lofty gibbet  
 To be set up and at the top to fasten  
 A twisted lasso. Thereupon he hung  
 That impious wretch head-downwards and alive,  
 And after slew him with a shower of arrows.  
 If thou art prudent follow not Mazdak !  
 The chiefs felt reassured about their wealth,  
 Their women, children, and their pleasures.  
 Kubád remained ashamed for many days,  
 And cursed Mazdak, gave mendicants much largess,  
 And offered gifts before the Fane of Fire.  
 He gladdened at Kisrá exceedingly  
 Because that Bough of his bare fruit of gems.  
 From that time forth the father sought alway  
 The son’s advice and heard what he would say.

### § 8

*How Kubád nominated Kisrá as Successor, and how the Great gave him the Name of Núshírwán<sup>1</sup>*

Now when Kubád had reigned for forty years  
 The grief of death’s day came upon his heart.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

C. 1617

He had a writing fairly drawn on silk  
 In that befitting and engaging script,<sup>1</sup>  
 And first he offered praise to that just Judge,  
 " Who gave us Faith, accomplishment, and wisdom,  
 Whose word is certain, whatsoe'er He saith,  
 Alike in secret things and manifest.  
 None hath beheld His height of sovereignty,  
 And His elect ne'er are contemptible.  
 All ye that see the writing of Kubád !  
 Give heed but to the counsel of the wise.  
 I have bestowed the honourable throne  
 Upon Kisrá. Fair fortune will be his  
 When I am dead. May God accept my son,  
 And may his foes' hearts be fulfilled with smoke.  
 By this our signet-ring we do require  
 Of archimages, chiefs, and other subjects  
 That ye in no wise shall transgress his bidding,  
 But joy in him and fill your treasures."

He set his golden signet on that writing,  
 And placed it with the archmage Rám Barzín.  
 Kubád had come to four-score years and yet,  
 Old as he was, he did not wish for death.  
 Is any in the world content to die  
 Since no man knoweth what will come thereby ?  
 He died and left the world as his bequest ;  
 His travail, ease, and pleasures passed away.  
 Who profiteth by what he hath amast  
 Since empty-handed go he must at last ?  
 They draped the body with brocade and called  
 For rose and musk, for camphor and for wine.  
 They made for him a royal charnel-house,  
 A golden throne and crown of majesty.  
 They set the Sháh upon the throne of gold,  
 Barred up the way thereto for evermore,  
 And thenceforth looked not on him. Thus he passed

<sup>1</sup> Pahlavi.

O'er this world, as thou mightst have said, like wind !  
 How canst thou trust then in this ancient sky  
 Since it will end thee irremediably ?

The mourning being o'er, the high priest spread  
 The royal document upon the throne,  
 The magnates and archmages of Frán,  
 And all the famous sages, met in conclave,  
 The document was read before them all,  
 And with rejoicing they enthroned the heir.<sup>1</sup>

Now when Kisrá ascended his new throne  
 The people hailed him as their new-made Sháh,  
 Called praises down on him as sovereign,  
 And time and earth submitted to his sway.  
 His throne revived the world, and at the stream      C. 1618  
 The sheep drank water with the wolf.<sup>2</sup> Folk said :—  
 “ May this Sháh live for ever. May his Grace  
 Surpass Jamshíd’s.”

His goodness and his justice,  
 His institutions, Faith, and far-famed knowledge  
 Were such that people called him Núshírwán,<sup>3</sup>  
 For love and signet were both young with him.

The story of Kubád is at an end,  
 And henceforth to Kisrá my thoughts I bend.

<sup>1</sup> In the text the reign of Núshírwán begins here, and there is no division before § 3.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. “ Of immortal soul.” Cf. p. 185.

XLI  
NÚSHÍRWÁN  
HE REIGNED FORTY-EIGHT YEARS

ARGUMENT

The poet tells of the accession of Núshírwán, his internal administration, his repression of marauding tribes, his first war with Rúm, the revolt and death of his son Núshzád, of the rise to power and wisdom of Búzurjmihr, the fall of Mahbúd, the Sháh's marriage with the daughter of the Khán, Búzurjmihr's discourse on good words and deeds, the introduction into Persia of the game of chess and the Fables of Bidpai, the legend of the invention of the former and that of the game of nard, the fall and the restoration to favour of Búzurjmihr, the wisdom of Núshírwán, his last war with Rúm, his appointment of his successor, and death.

NOTE

Kisrá, surnamed Núshírwán (Chosroës I, A.D. 531-578), ruled contemporaneously with three Eastern Roman Emperors—Justinian (A.D. 527-565), Justin II (A.D. 565-574), and Tiberius II (A.D. 574-582). Justin resigned the rule to Tiberius, the captain of the guards, in A.D. 574, but did not die till A.D. 578, the year of Núshírwán's death. Núshírwán was perhaps the greatest of the twenty-nine Sásánian Sháhs, at least it is not easy to assign that title to any other unless we reserve it for the founder of the dynasty, Ardshír Pápakán, who has to his credit the overthrow of a long-standing foreign domination, the re-establishment of a national dynasty, and all the toil of political reconstruction that his successful revolt against the last Arsacid involved.

It will be seen that the poet had plenty of material for this portion of his undertaking. The subject-matter falls naturally into certain well-defined divisions; accordingly we have broken

up the reign, as in the case of that of Gushtásp,<sup>1</sup> into Parts, but there is no such arrangement in the original.

Kísrá will be referred to throughout by his popular title of Núshírwán.

The principal historical events recorded by Firdausí in his account of the reign may be placed in approximate chronological order as follows :—

The fall of Mahbúd.

The reorganisation of the kingdom, finances, and army.

The chastisement of barbarous frontier-tribes.

The fortification of Darband.

The first war with Rúm (A.D. 540-562).

The revolt of Núshzáf (A.D. 551).

Núshírwán's marriage with the daughter of the Khán.

The introduction into Persia of the Fables of Bidpai (about A.D. 570).

The birth of Muhammad (about A.D. 571).

The second war with Rúm (A.D. 572).

The first eight of these are included in the present volume.

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. v. p. 9.

## PART I

### NÚSHÍRWÁN'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE REALM, HIS WARS WITH FRONTIER-TRIBES AND WITH RÚM, AND THE REVOLT OF NÚSHZÁD

#### ARGUMENT

Núshírwán ascends the throne and makes an oration to the people. He divides the realm into four provinces, and takes order for all matter civil and military. He builds a wall in the Caucasus and represses the Aláns and the men of Balích and Gilán. He espouses the cause of Munzir, the Arab, against Cæsar, invades Rúm, takes cities, and compels Cæsar to sue for peace and to pay tribute. On a false report of the Sháh's death his son, Núshzád, a Christian, attempts to seize the crown. Núshírwán writes to his general, Rám Barzín, instructing him how to proceed, and Núshzád is defeated and slain.

#### NOTE

§ 2. Núshírwán's accession to the throne was not universally popular and gave rise to a formidable conspiracy in favour of one of his nephews.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. Núshírwán's division of his empire into four satrapies differs in details in the different authorities, but seems to have been suggested by the names of the four winds. According to Dínawarí the East included Khurásán, Sístán, and Kirmán; the North Ispahán, Kum, Media Magna, and Ázrbáiján; the South Párs and Ahwáz; the West 'Irák to the Roman frontier.<sup>2</sup> Firdausí includes the Khazars in the South division—a mistake. They lived beyond the Caucasus.<sup>3</sup> He includes too Rúm in the West division on the assumption, for which there was certainly some justification at this time, that Rúm was tributary to Irán. A peace or truce concluded between Justinian and Núshírwán involved almost as a matter of course a money-payment from the former to the latter. It did not follow that Justinian always got the worst of the bargain. For instance, in the definite treaty of peace between the two

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 155, *note*.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. iv. p. 316.

empires in A.D. 562, Núshírwán's renunciation of Lazica (Mingrelia and Imeritia), and consequently of his dream of a fleet and of assailing Rúm by sea, was well worth the thirty thousand pieces of gold to be paid annually by Justinian though it did lay the Emperor open to the imputation of being tributary to the Sháh. Traditional instances of such payments crop up in the Sháhnáma as far back as the days of Dáráb and Failakús.<sup>1</sup>

The popular version of the origin of Kubád's resolve to alter the system of taxation has been given already.<sup>2</sup> It was left to Núshírwán to carry it out. According to Tabarí the taxes imposed were as follows:—On every garib of corn-land, i.e. sown with wheat or barley, a ground-tax of one drachm was imposed, on every garib of vineyard eight, and of lucerne seven; on four Persian date-palms, six common date-palms, provided that they grew in plantations or in numbers, and on six olives, one drachm. Single, scattered trees were not taxed. On all men between the ages of twenty and fifty a poll-tax varying, according to the fortune of a man, was imposed. The people were arranged in classes and paid twelve, eight, six, or four drachms according to their means. The taxes were paid yearly in three instalments at intervals of four months. Schedules of the taxes were drawn up, one of which was kept at the royal chancery, one sent to each collector, and one to each district-judge. The judges were priests and were charged particularly with the duty of seeing that the collectors did not exceed the tariff, and also, in cases where the crops had been damaged, with the duty of remitting taxation to a proportionate amount. The nobility, soldiers, priests, scribes, and others in the royal service, were exempt from the poll-tax.<sup>3</sup> They were supposed to render their due to the State in other ways.

§ 6. Farídún had his capital in Mázandarán. See Vol. i. pp. 177, 230. For the vegetation of that region, which is very luxuriant, see Vol. ii. pp. 27, 31.

For the fortifications at Darband, see p. 187 and Vol. i. p. 16. Mas'ídí's two accounts of Núshírwán's wall, as given in the French translation, are as follows:—"Appelé dans le pays d'El-Bab et dans le Caucase par les incursions des rois du voisinage, il bâtit sur le mer (Caspienne), à l'aide d'autres de cuir gonflées, une muraille de rochers, qu'il consolida avec le fer et le plomb. Ces autres s'enfonçaient dans l'eau, à mesure que le construction s'elevait; lorsqu'elles s'arrêtèrent sur le fond et que la muraille

<sup>1</sup> See vol. vi. p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> p. 183, note.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 244. A garib is said to have been equal to 3600 square ells and a drachm to 88 centimes. *Id.* pp. 242, 245, notes.

dépassa le niveau de l'eau, des plongeurs, armés de poignards et de coutelas, crevèrent les outres ; la muraille, entrant profondément dans le sol sous-marin, atteignit alors la hauteur du rivage. Elle existe encore aujourd'hui, en 332,<sup>1</sup> et toute la partie de cette muraille dont les assises plongent dans la mer est nommée *el-kaïd* (la chaîne), parce qu'elle arrêta les bâtiments ennemis qui tentaient d'aborder sur cette côte. On continua le même travail le long du rivage, entre le Caucase et la mer ; on pratiqua des portes donnant sur le territoire infidèle, et l'on prolongea la muraille sur le mont Caucase, ainsi que nous l'avons dit ci-dessus, en décrivant cette montagne et la ville d'El-Bab.<sup>2</sup>

The other account referred to is this :—“Le Kabkh est une grande chaîne de montagnes qui renferme, dans sa vaste étendue, un nombre considérable de royaumes et de tribus : en effet, on n'y compte pas moins de soixante et douze peuplades, qui ont chacune leur chef et parlent une langue qui leur est propre. Ces montagnes sont sillonnées de gorges et de vallées ; c'est à la tête de l'un de ces défilés que se trouve la ville de Bab-el-Abwâb, bâtie par Kosroës Enouchirwân, sur un point intermédiaire entre le pays montueux et la mer des Khazars. Le même souverain construisit cette célèbre muraille qui, d'une part, s'avance dans la mer, jusqu'à une distance d'environ un mille des côtes, et, d'autre part, s'élève sur les sommets abruptes des montagnes et descend dans leur gorges profondes, sur une longueur de quarante parasanges, jusqu'à ce qu'elle aboutisse à une place forte nommée Tabarestân. De trois milles en trois milles à peu près, suivant l'importance de la route sur laquelle elle s'ouvrait, il plaça une porte de fer, près de laquelle il installa, dans l'intérieur de l'enceinte, une peuplade chargée de veiller à sa garde et à celle de la muraille. Ce rempart devait opposer une barrière infranchissable aux attaques des tribus voisines du Kabkh, telles que les Khazars, les Alains, les Turcs, les Serirs et les autres peuplades infidèles.”<sup>3</sup>

One of the terms of peace made between Nûshîrwân and Justinian, after the death of Kubâd, was that Persia should be paid the sum of eleven thousand pounds of gold towards the maintenance of the defences in the Caucasus and should undertake the actual defence herself.<sup>4</sup>

For Sikandar's wall, built, according to the legend, with a similar purpose, see Vol. vi. p. 163.

#### § 7. Nûshîrwân's dealings with the Alâns and the folk of Gilán

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 943.

<sup>2</sup> MM, ii. 196.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> RSM, p. 382.

are historical, but Firdausí substitutes the Balúchíz, who made themselves very troublesome in his time, for another tribe, mentioned in his authorities but unknown to him, which dwelt north of the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> It is very unlikely that any of the Sásánian Sháhs ever got as far East as Hindústán.

§§ 8-10. The accession of Núshírwán found Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire at war, but a year or two later he concluded what was known as the “the endless peace” with Justinian. The title was somewhat unfortunate, as in A.D. 540 war again broke out owing, according to Firdausí and Tabarí, to the treatment of Munzir, prince of Híra (A.D. 505-554), by the Romans. He was Núshírwán’s protégé and had a dispute with Hárith bin Jabala, the Ghassánían and Justinian’s protégé, about a pasturage for sheep south of Palmyra. Hárith, as Tabarí states, attacked Munzir, made a great slaughter of his people, and carried off much booty. Munzir appealed to Núshírwán, who could get no accommodation from Justinian, and war ensued between the two empires.<sup>2</sup> Historically of course there were other reasons, one of the chief being that Justinian, secured on his Persian frontier by the “endless peace,” had availed himself of the opportunity and the services of Belisarius to extend and almost double his possessions by conquests in the West. “Both his friends and his enemies said, with hate or admiration, ‘The whole earth cannot contain him; he is already scrutinising the æther and the retreats beyond the ocean, if he may win some new world.’”<sup>3</sup> Justinian’s success threatened to upset the balance of power. Probably, too, there were always “pin-pricks” going on between the two empires.

§ 11. The Fire-temple visited by Núshírwán before beginning his campaign was probably not one at Tabríz but the more famous one at what is now Takht-i-Sulaimán, about one hundred miles to the South. It was to this latter that the Sásánian Sháhs were wont to resort at important epochs in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

It will be noticed that a Mihrán commands the centre of Núshírwán’s host—another instance of the prominent part played by this family of Arsacid descent in Sásánian times. Cf. p. 185.

§ 12. Crossing the Euphrates Núshírwán marched along its western bank till he reached Sura, the Greek τὰ Σοῦρα and the Shúráb of Firdausí, which was taken without difficulty, sacked, and burnt. The Sháh then advanced to Hierapolis, the Áráyish-i-Rúm of the Sháhnáma, which was allowed to ransom itself for two

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 157, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 238; BLRE, i. 418.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. pp. 5, 86, 94.

thousand pounds of silver.<sup>1</sup> Hierapolis sounds somewhat like Áráyish, which means "ornament," so it would seem that the poet converted the name of that city into Áráyish-i-Rúm or "Ornament of Rúm."

§ 13. On leaving this city Núshírwán, according to Firdausí, encountered and defeated a Rúman army led by Farfúriyús. Historically, the Persians in their advance on Antioch, in the course of which they held Chalybon-Beroea (Aleppo) to ransom, appear to have been unopposed. The occupation of Káliniyús (Callinicus) did not take place till the third campaign (A.D. 543) when the city made no resistance, and the inhabitants were led away captive. It was situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. In A.D. 531, however, Belisarius, after foiling an attempt of a combined force of Persians and Arabs to raid Antioch, was worsted in a battle at Callinicus; so the two campaigns may have become confused in tradition. Germanus, Justinian's nephew, had been at Antioch before the Persians reached and stormed it in A.D. 540, but had withdrawn as he considered the existing fortifications could not be held with success. The taking of Antákiya (Antioch) was Núshírwán's crowning achievement in this his first campaign against Rúm, and he returned home by another route, compelling various cities to ransom themselves on his way. Farfúriyús is probably Firdausí's rendering of a Byzantine title. Belisarius took no part in the campaign of A.D. 540; he only returned from Italy in that year.

§ 14. That Núshírwán built a new Antioch on the Tigris, not far from Ctesiphon, as a residence for his Roman captives is no doubt historical, though we need not commit ourselves to Tabari's statement that the new town was so exactly a reproduction of the original that the captives, on arriving, went to their own houses as naturally as if they never had left home.<sup>2</sup> The cordwainer from Callinicus would be a later arrival.<sup>3</sup> The new Antioch was also known as Rúmiya or "The Rúman" and by other names.

§ 15. Negotiations for peace had been going on even during the first year of the war, though they came to nothing, but five years later a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon for five years. Justinian had to give Núshírwán two thousand pounds of gold.<sup>4</sup> Firdausí does not carry the story of the war further. Peace was made, after the resumption of the war which was followed by another five years' truce, definitively in A.D. 562.

<sup>1</sup> RSM, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> RSM, pp. 391 seq., 404.

§§ 16-19. The revolt of Núshzád, "Immortal-born," is historical, and the circumstances attending it may be stated fairly correctly perhaps as follows. He seems to have been Núshírwán's eldest son, and to have been brought up as a Christian by his mother, who was in that Sháh's seraglio and of course a Christian herself. On account of his religion, or for some other reason, he was interned by his father at Gund-i-Shápúr,<sup>1</sup> which contained a strong Christian element and was the seat of the Nestorian Metropolitan—the next in rank to the Patriarch.<sup>2</sup> When the news, false as it turned out, of his father's death reached him he had every reason to bestir himself. In the circumstances there was a likelihood of his being passed over in the matter of the succession. His father's known disapproval, the rivalry of his brothers, and his own religion, were obstacles which had to be faced promptly if at all, while as the eldest-born it was only natural that he should aspire to the vacant throne. At the time when his rising occurred (A.D. 551) there was a five years' truce in force between Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire, so it is not likely that he got much help from that quarter. Probably Justinian never heard of the affair till it was all over. The Christian inhabitants of Gund-i-Shápúr naturally would support Núshzád, and it is interesting to find that the leader of his troops is Shammás—a word meaning a Christian priest or deacon. The general Persian opinion of Christians is shown by the word "tarsá," which means a Christian because its primary meaning is "cowardly," but it does not appear that Firdausí shared that view; on the contrary, when obviously putting his own words into the mouths of his characters, he treats the Church militant, especially the episcopacy, with much respect.<sup>3</sup> It is very unlikely therefore that the derogatory words concerning Christianity in the utterances of Núshírwán and Pírúz were the poet's own. Neither are they characteristically Muhammadan. Firdausí found them in his authorities translated from the Pahlaví. Historically, Núshzád does not appear to have fallen in the fight: he fell into his father's hands, was blinded probably, imprisoned, and disappeared from history. The concluding scene of the story may be regarded therefore as the poet's own contribution to it. There is nothing polemical there, but all is characterised by dignity and good feeling.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. vi. p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Vol. i. p. 378. Cf., too, the parable of the kerchiefs where Christianity is meant by the "Faith of Yúnán," which is described as being "good." Vol. vi. p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> For Núshzád generally see NT, p. 467.

## § I

*The Prelude*

“ O lofty Cypress, thou that ravishest  
 The heart ! oh ! wherefore art thou thus opprest ?  
 With pleasure, Grace, and luxury anear  
 Why is thine ardent heart fulfilled with fear ? ”  
 Said to the questioner the Cypress-tree :—  
 “ I was in joy ere age o’ermastered me.  
 I yield me to the puissance of three-score,  
 Forbear then and contend therewith no more,  
 For it hath dragon’s breath and lion’s claw,  
 And whomsoe’er it flingeth it will gnaw.  
 It hath the might of wolf, and thunder-breath,  
 In one hand care and in the other death.  
 It maketh stoop the Cypress that subdued  
 All hearts, it maketh jasmine amber-hued ;  
 It giveth saffron’s tint to cercis-bloom,  
 And, after saffron’s tint, a toilful doom.  
 The runner’s foot is bound though fetterless,  
 The precious body turned to wretchedness ;  
 The lustrous pearls begin to fail with me,  
 And stoopeth too the noble cypress-tree ;  
 My melancholy eyes bewail and run  
 Through their debility and travail done ;  
 My blithe, glad heart is full of pain, and thus  
 These days of mine have grown ungenerous.  
 Or ever man is weaned his death is nigh,  
 And people call him old ! The sovereignty  
 Of Núshírwán was forty years and eight ;  
 To look for youth at sixty is too late  
 For thee, so seek an end to thine affairs,  
 And wound thy heart no more by gainful cares.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is no break here in the original.

## § 2

*How Núshírwán ascended the Throne and made an Oration  
to the Iránians*

When Núshírwán<sup>1</sup> assumed the ivory throne,  
And donned the crown—the lustre of the heart—  
The great men of the world were gathered there  
What time the Sháh sat with his counsellors.  
That chief of famous men then loosed his tongue,  
Invoked the righteous Giver of all good,  
And said : “ Be our hearts filled with praise and love  
Toward the almighty Ruler of the sky,  
From whom are good and ill, fame and desire,  
By whom I am made sorrowful and glad,  
Of whom are Grace and strength. By His command  
The sun is bright in heaven. We will not quit  
His counsels and His covenant, or reckon  
Our breaths but at His bidding. He that doth  
That which is just upon the throne of power  
Will have fruition of good fortune here ;  
But he that harboureth an ill intent  
Will bring disaster on himself at last.  
Whate'er ye ask of us we will reply,  
And in our answer will advise you well.  
None wotteth of the secrets of the heart ;  
That is a way too strait for me to find ;  
But still if justice be the Sháh’s employ  
It surely will rejoice the hearts of all.  
Delay not till the morrow this day’s work ;  
How know’st thou what to-morrow will bring forth ?  
The rosary in bloom to-day will have  
But worthless flowers for thee to cull to-morrow.  
In days when thou art hale be not unmindful  
Of malady, of suffering, and of loss ;

C. 1619

<sup>1</sup> Kisrá in the original, but henceforth we write Núshírwán.

Think of the day of death which closeth life,  
 And how with death we are as leaves with wind.  
 When thou art slack to act thou makest all  
 Thy policy unsound. When envy swayeth  
 The heart of man no leech can cure that ache.  
 When passion mastereth wisdom is't not proof  
 Of madness ? Furthermore none honoureth  
 The quarrelsome and talkative. The path  
 That leadeth thee to guile is gloomier,  
 To right is straiter. Skilful as thou art,  
 If thou art lazy and perfunctory  
 Thy work will turn out ill. Whene'er the tongue  
 Is wedded to deceit it hath no lustre  
 From heavenly fortune. Feckless folk resort  
 To lying, and we can but weep for such.  
 Whenas the Sháh is first to rise from slumber  
 He will be safe from foes and hale of body.  
 Be wise and have withal enough to eat,  
 But more than this is anguish, toil, and greed.  
 Whenas a Sháh is just and liberal  
 The world is full of goodness and of peace,  
 But if he thwarteth justice in its course  
 He eateth colocynth and drinketh blood.  
 All ye in this assembly ! hear what I  
 Proclaim to you, learn it, observe it well,  
 And all your years fare side by side with fortune :  
 Full many a crownéd monarch have we scanned,  
 And our choice is the path of right and wisdom ;  
 Yet must ye listen to my minister,  
 For good and ill appear not save through him.<sup>1</sup>  
 Whoever cometh to this court of mine  
 With just cause whether in or out of season,  
 No minister of mine will I approve  
 That keepeth such a matter hid from me.  
 As for the officers about my court,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And valiant cavaliers among my troops,  
As we stint not the stipend due to them  
So must they tender mine own name and fame.

Let all be done humanely and uprightly  
Without defect of justice. Every one,  
That, being an Iránian, girdeth him  
To do his service in this court of ours,  
Shall have both treasure and kind words from us  
If he shall prove a shrewd and modest servant ;  
But if his underlings shall be oppressed,  
And he shall be unwise and fear not God,  
He shall be punished for his wickedness,  
And we should grieve not o'er the fall of one  
So despicable. Keep within your hearts  
The laws of holy God and fear not us,  
For He is King of kings, Lord of the world,  
Victorious, and One whose word is law,  
The Illuminer of crown and sun and moon,  
Who showeth us the way of righteousness.  
Lord of the world is He, the Judge of judges,  
And higher than the thoughts of every man.  
He hath created heaven, space, and time,  
And hath adorned our souls and hearts with love.  
He is the Guard of crown and lofty throne,  
And when thou seekest help will succour thee.  
'Tis He hath fired your hearts with love of us,  
His will hath blinded, heart and eye, our foes.  
Well-being is all subject to His hest,  
All goodness underneath His providence.  
All from the stubble to the seventh heaven—  
Air, fire, and water, and our gloomy earth—  
Bear witness to His being and afford  
Thereof a clear assurance to thy soul.  
Whate'er we praise is under His command,  
And all our worship dedicate to Him."

C. 1620

When Núshírwán had spoken all the world  
Was lost in wonder at him. To their feet  
All rose with praise anew the Sháh to greet.

### § 3

*How Núshírwán divided his Realm into four Parts and wrote  
a Decree to his Officers on the Administration of Justice*

The king of kings called unto him the wise,  
And settled the affairs of all the world.  
The world itself he parted into four,  
Assigning that which was inhabited.  
He first of all for Khurásán took thought,  
And filled thereby the nobles' hearts with joy.  
The second part was Kum and Ispahán—  
The seat of magnates and the place of chiefs—  
Wherewith Ázar Ábádagán, whereon  
The Iránians lavished offerings, was comprised.  
That Sháh of wary heart <sup>1</sup> included too  
Armenia up to Ardabil and Gil.

C. 1621 The third from east to west was formed of Párs,  
Ahwáz, and of the marches of Khazar.  
'Irák together with the land of Rúm  
Came fourth—a splendid realm and populous—  
And in these marches to the indigent,  
Who had to toil to satisfy their needs,  
The Sháh made largess of his hoarded treasures,  
And all folk blessed him.

Now of former Sháhs—

Sháhs greater or inferior to himself—  
All had required a portion of the crops,  
And no man thitherto had 'scaped the tax.  
The royal portion was a third or fourth

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Until Kubád came and required a tenth.  
 He meant to have reduced it further still,  
 And strove to make the lowly like the lord,  
 But fortune gave him not the time.<sup>1</sup> Whilst thou  
 Art in the stream ne'er trust the crocodile.  
 The crown of worship came to Núshírwán,  
 And he remitted all the tenth forthwith.  
 The sages, chiefs, great men, and archimages,  
 The shrewd of heart, assembled—all the rulers.  
 They had the land partitioned and surveyed,  
 And laid thereon a land-tax of one drachm  
 So that the owners might not be distressed.  
 All that lacked seed or beast, when they should be  
 Preparing for the crops, were subsidised  
 Out of the treasure of the king of kings  
 So that they might not let the ground lie fallow.  
 Land, if untilled, was left out of account ;  
 The previous usages were done away.  
 On each six fruiting vines a drachm was levied,  
 Date-palm plantations paid an equal tax,  
 While each ten stems of olives and of walnuts,  
 And other trees that bear their fruit in autumn,  
 Brought one drachm to the treasury, and this  
 Was made the only burden of the year.  
 To fruits that ripened in the month Khúrdád  
 No heed was paid in taxing. From the men  
 Of means who neither owned nor tilled the soil  
 The tax-collector every year received  
 A payment varying from ten drachms to four ;  
 But no one was oppressed because the money  
 Was paid in three instalments annually,  
 And thus a third part of the tax was paid  
 Each four months to the exchequer of the Sháh.  
 The royal scribes and officers employed  
 Within the taxing-office passed all count.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 183, note.

The Sháh had these above-named tolls and imposts  
 Recorded by the archmages in three ledgers,  
 Whereof he gave one to the treasurer,  
 And made that minister account for it ;  
 The second was for sending through the realm  
 To all officials and the men in power ;  
 The third was handed to the archimages  
 To keep account of all the revenue.  
 All that concerned tax, toll, and husbandry  
 Was done by order of the Sháh himself,  
 And he had agents scattered everywhere  
 To keep him cognisant of good and ill.  
 He filled with justice all the face of earth,  
 And cultivated all the barren lands ;  
 Both great and small slept safely on the waste,  
 And sheep and wolf came to one trough. He bade  
 To draw up in the olden tongue a letter—  
 One that will pleasure thee to hear from me.  
 It thus began : “ From Núshírwán, the chief—  
 The king of kings, the worshipper of God,  
 A Bough fruit-bearing from the Tree Kubád—  
 Who hath assumed the crown of majesty,  
 And in especial prospered all the land,  
 For God, the just Judge, gave him Grace divine,  
 To all the officers of revenue—  
 Thralls of the shadow of our Grace and throne—  
 Our well weighed greetings unto you whose birth  
 Hath been exceeded by your own deserts.  
 Here at the outset of our task we first  
 Give praises to the Maker of the world.  
 Know that the man is wise and shrewd of heart,  
 Whose praise is of the righteous Judge of earth,  
 Well knowing that He hath no need of us,  
 And that all secrets are revealed to Him,  
 Who when He willeth to exalt a man  
 First maketh him superior to all want.

He bade me judge, but He is Judge Himself,  
And higher than all height eternally.

In God's sight king and subject are as one,  
And saving service none hath aught to do ;  
From the abyss of earth to heaven above,  
And from the sun to dark and sorry dust,  
The ant's foot beareth witness that He is,  
That we are bondslaves and that He is king.  
All His commands to us are righteousness ;  
It is the Dív that causeth lies and loss.

Now if my portion of the spacious world  
Had been a garden only, park, and palace,  
My heart had chosen naught but love and justice,  
And kept a smiling face for everything ;  
But now the expanse of all the world throughout  
From east to west hath God, the Holy One,  
Bestowed upon me as my sovereignty—  
All from the bright sun to the darksome dust—  
And I must practise naught save love and justice  
Although I furrow mine own face thereby.

If careless be the shepherd and the waste  
Thus vast the sheep will 'scape not from the wolf.  
As for my subjects, whether country-folk  
Or those devoted to the Cult of Fire,  
Be they in drouthy dust or ship at sea  
By day or night alike, or be they merchants,  
Engaged in voyaging over wet and dry  
With monies and with lustrous pearls and musk,  
The sun must shine not from the arch of heaven  
Upon them save in justice and in love.

Now this hath been the custom of our race  
That son should have his father's crown and this  
The world hath recognised as just and right  
With one consent in public and in private.  
We have imposed a land-tax and a tree-tax  
For sustentation of the throne and crown.

Now when they bring this letter to you may  
Urmuzd prove fortunate to you. Whoever  
Herein transgresseth by a single drachm,  
Or doth injustice for a single breath,  
I swear by God, who hath bestowed upon me  
The diadem of Grace, that I will saw  
That man in twain ; such is God's chastisement  
On those whose evil seed hath come to fruit.  
Observe this letter and this ordinance,  
And turn not from the glorious Way and Faith.  
Demand with justice and with courtesy  
The instalment of the tax due each four months ;  
But where the locusts have been ravaging,  
Or sunbeams beaten on the parched-up earth,  
Or where the blast or lightning of high heaven  
Hath brought disaster on the cultured fields,  
Or if rain falleth not at the New Year,  
So that the jocund crops are vexed with drought,  
Demand no tax upon those fields and crops,  
Because the spring-clouds have not watered them,  
And pay the seed sown and the labourers' hire  
Back to the farmers from the treasury.  
The lands whose owner is deceased and hath  
No kith and kin must lie not waste, for they  
Are underneath the shadow of the Sháh ;  
Else will the foe make scorn of my resources  
With such a pretext ready to his hand.  
Give what is needed from the treasury,  
For God hath set me out of reach of need.  
If lands within my power lie desolate,  
Unsheltered by the shadow of my wing,  
Whoe'er he be that is responsible,  
And doth neglect the task, hard though it be,  
Him, whether lord or underling, will I  
Hang from the gibbet on the spot. The great—  
The Sháhs of yore—had other usages,

With their officials rested right and wrong,  
 The world lay open to the cavaliers,  
 Who wantonly mocked wisdom and ne'er rested  
 From adding to their wealth. My wealth is justice ;  
 The people of the land compose my host ;  
 I will not cast a glance upon dinárs.  
 To win by equity the world's regard,  
 And to respect the worth of men of birth,  
 Are dearer to me than the wealth of foes  
 That seek to win my kingdom and my throne.  
 The general that selleth men for gold  
 Shall get no entry to my court wherat  
 They are esteemed that follow justice, love,  
 Law and the Way. When my shrewd officers  
 Assemble at the office of the archmage,  
 And falsehood showeth in the words of any,  
 He shall receive no grace from us henceforth.  
 I do not love the man that is unjust ;  
 The leopard and the oppressor are as one.  
 All they that have ensued the way of God,  
 And bathed their dark souls in the stream of wisdom,  
 Shall have a lofty station at our court,  
 High estimation with the archimages,  
 And from their God for that which they have sown  
 The recompense of jocund Paradise.  
 We are ourselves exempt from need of wealth  
 Whereby the soul is minished and accursed.  
 He that doth eat the flesh of mendicants  
 Will find, no doubt, some nurture in their skins.  
 A pard is better than a king like that,  
 Who hath no modesty, no rule, no Faith.  
 The way of right is open to us. Why  
 Knock we in folly on the door of loss ?  
 To do ill closely, justice openly,  
 So that the fame thereof may come to us,  
 Will have not God's approval, or be held

C. 1624

In high consideration at our court ;  
 But he hath God's approval and our own  
 Whose love and justice are as warp and woof."

If thou art just, O monarch ! thou wilt give  
 The world a record of thee that will live,  
 For every one will praise eternally  
 The Sháh that brought the world prosperity.

#### § 4

*How Núshírwán required Bábak to muster the Host*

C. 1625

Of all the Sháhs that erst had throne and crown,  
 And had been great in treasure and in troops,  
 There was not one more just than Núshírwán,  
 And may his soul be young for evermore.  
 None was more worshipful for manhood, throne,  
 For diadem and knowledge. He possessed  
 An archimage, Bábak by name, a man  
 Of wisdom, shrewd of heart, and fortunate,  
 Made him the muster-master of the host,  
 And bade him to prepare himself an office  
 Of ample size before the palace-gate,  
 And higher than its top, and furnish it  
 With carpets that were worthy of a king  
 To seat the clerks engaged upon the work.  
 A proclamation issued from his office,  
 And all the folk gave ear : " Famed warriors !  
 Mount and attend the portal of the Sháh,  
 All ye that would have guerdon at his hands !  
 With iron helmets set upon your heads,  
 Arrayed in mail and bearing ox-head maces."

The troops came to the office of Bábak,  
 The air was darkened by the horsemen's dust.  
 Now when Bábak reviewed the host he missed <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

The standard and the chief of all the noble.  
 He left the office, mounted on his steed,  
 And bade the soldiers go back to their quarters.  
 The turning sky continued on its course,  
 And when the radiant sun displayed its face  
 It was proclaimed before the palace-gate :—  
 “ Ye mace-men of the army of Frán !  
 Go all in full array with arms and bows  
 And lassos to the office of Bábak.”

They went with lances, helms, and coats of mail ;  
 The army’s dust ascended to the clouds.  
 Bábak looked round upon the host but, since  
 The Sháh appeared not in his Grace and state,  
 Thus spake : “ Return glad and victorious  
 In love and duty, each man to his quarters.”

Again the third day rose the proclamation :—  
 “ Ye men of name, of Grace divine and wisdom !  
 Let there not be one horseman of this host  
 Without his helmet and cuirass of war,  
 And let him come and pass before this gate,  
 And see his name upon the muster-roll.  
 Let those that are distinguished by a crown,  
 By Grace, by majesty, and lofty fortunes,  
 Know that this muster is without respect  
 Of persons, reticence, and modesty.”

The king of kings gave ear thereto and heeded  
 The proclamation from Bábak’s díván,  
 Then smiling called for coat of mail and helm,  
 And held erect the flag of majesty.  
 The Sháh, with iron helmet on his head,  
 Proceeded to the office of Bábak.  
 The chain-mail hung down from his Rúman helm,  
 And was secured by many a fastening.  
 Within his hand he had an ox-head mace,  
 Within his belt four shafts of poplar-wood,  
 A bow on arm and lasso on the saddle.

While round his loins he had a golden girdle.  
 He urged his charger, gripping with his thighs,  
 And laid the massive mace upon his shoulder ;  
 Then, lightly wheeling both to left and right,  
 Displayed both steed and rider to Bábak,  
 Who when he had inspected them approved,  
 And, having come up to the king of kings,

C. 1626 Said thus to him : “ O Sháh ! mayst thou be blessed !  
 May wisdom be the provand of thy soul !  
 Thou hast adorned the kingdom’s face with justice,  
 Such that with us ’tis thy memorial.  
 What I have said was boldness from a slave,  
 But never must thou turn from what is just ;  
 So now, I prithee, wheel thee to the right  
 With all the skill whereof thou art the master.”

Then Núshírwán again urged on his steed  
 To right and left as ’twere Ázargashasp.  
 Bábak looked on amazed and oft invoked  
 The Maker of the world. A horseman’s pay  
 Ran from a thousand to two thousand drachms ;  
 Four thousand were the most that any had.  
 Bábak paid to the Sháh just one drachm more.  
 Then from the office-door ’twas cried : “ Exhibit  
 The charger of the first of warriors—  
 The horseman of the world, the famous Sháh,”  
 While Núshírwán laughed heartily, for fortune  
 Was young with him and he a youthful king.  
 Now when Bábak had left the royal office  
 He came before the noble Sháh and said :—  
 “ Great Sháh ! if I, thy slave, made bold to-day  
 The purpose of my heart was right and just :  
 Let not the Sháh take notice of my harshness ;  
 It is not harshness to discharge one’s duty,  
 And blest is he who meant not to be harsh.”

“ O man of wisdom ! ” said the Sháh to him,  
 “ Keep thyself ever in the path of right,

Whereof thou break'st the heart by self-regard.  
 Know that thou art the dearer in mine eyes ;  
 But mine anxiety is for myself—  
 How, when the army is engaged in fight,  
 I shall comport myself upon the field.”

Bábak made answer to the noble Sháh :—

“ No crown and signet will behold thy like,  
 While painter hath observed not limned in hall  
 A hand and rein like thine, O king ! Oh ! may  
 High heaven accord to thee thy full desire,  
 Oh ! may thy heart be glad, thyself unseathed ! ”

Thus to the archimage said Núshírwán :—

“ Our justice shall make old folk young again.  
 The king must leave as his memorial  
 Within the world but righteousness alone.  
 What need have we for such a treasury,  
 Such toil and greed, and to confine our soul  
 Within this Wayside Inn ? The need, since here  
 Is no abiding, is to eat and drink.

I have been troubled with the world’s affairs,  
 Although I kept those matters to myself,  
 Because my royal crown hath enemies,  
 And Áhriaman doth compass me about.

Methought : ‘ I will bring troops from every side,  
 And summon warriors from every province,  
 But for the levy I have need of treasure,  
 Which I have but to labour to amass ;

Still if this bringeth evil on the poor  
 I must refrain my heart from this desire.’

So I revolved this matter in my heart,  
 And, having come upon a wise resolve,  
 I wrote a letter to the paladins,  
 The mighty men, and prudent archimates,  
 To all the nobles and the potentates  
 In all the provinces, and thus it ran :—

‘ All ye possessed of wisdom and of sense !

Bring up your sons for military service,  
 Dispatch them to the field equipped for war,  
 And look to me for honour and reward.  
 They must be able to distinguish hand  
 And rein from stirrup on the hills and dales,  
 And learn to battle with the enemy  
 With mace and scimitar, with bow and arrow,  
 Because a youth unskilled availeth naught  
 Although he be descended from Árish.<sup>1</sup>  
 The muster-master went forth from the court,  
 With money for the chiefs, to every province,  
 And now in sooth I have adorned the face  
 Of earth with men prepared to take the field.  
 I have more knowledge, policy, and method  
 Than former Sháhs, and greater armaments."

The archmage, when he heard the Sháh speak thus,  
 Called praises down upon the crown and throne.

The payment was delayed for forty days,  
 And then the athelings, equipped for war,  
 Went to the office and received their pay  
 While joyance was the order of the day.

### § 5

*How Núshírwán harangued the Iránians, and how the  
 Kings acknowledged his Supremacy*

Now when the sun displayed its shining face,  
 When circling heaven unlocked the garden-gate,  
 And when the Mound of Fenugreek appeared  
 While dark night's tresses vanished, Núshírwán,  
 All smiles, glad-hearted, and of youthful fortune,  
 Sat on his throne, while all that sought redress  
 Flocked to his court. The king harangued them  
 thus :—

<sup>1</sup> For whom see Vol. v. n. 12.

“ Acknowledge that ye have not any helper  
 Save holy God, the Lord of all, our Guide,  
 Who leadeth us in both worlds by the hand.  
 Fear not the throne and crown, the court is open  
 To all, and ye soe'er that come thereto  
 By day and night keep not your lips from speech.  
 If we are quaffing wine in company,  
 Or busied with advisers, or at polo,  
 Or on the hunting-field, the way is open  
 For you to us. Let access be withheld  
 From none because I am asleep, awake,  
 At work or play. Let none of you withdraw  
 From us to sleep with wants unsatisfied.  
 My heart will be rejoiced and bright whenever  
 I break the travail of the oppressed. Please God,  
 No officer of mine, no man at arms,  
 No servitor, shall sleep with heart aggrieved,  
 For from his grievance harm will come on me.  
 However trifling or obscure the matter  
 The Maker will require it at my hands.  
 For tolls and imposts, other than the archmages  
 Are now concerned with in mine offices,  
 No gold or silver shall be asked of you,  
 So sleep all unafraid of me henceforth.”

Then sunward from the face of earth applause  
 Rose from the hall : “ May Núshírwán have Grace,  
 And all his years the crown of king of kings !  
 Ne'er may the throne, the state, and famous crown  
 Of sovereignty be void of him ! ”

They went  
 Their ways, glad and rejoicing, and earth's face  
 Grew like the garden of Iram.<sup>1</sup> Thou hadst not  
 Seen any one despondent in the world,  
 While from the clouds came seasonable rain,  
 The world resembled jocund Paradise,

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 100.

C. 1628

The clouds sowed tulips in the pleasances,  
The dales, the plains, and orchards shone like lamps,  
The uplands were like garths, garths like the sun.

Thereafter tidings came to Rúm and Hind :—  
“ Irán is like fine painted silk of Rúm ;  
The Sháh hath decked with armaments and justice  
The earth till it is like the shining moon.  
No one in all the world doth know the sum  
Of all his forces save the Sháh himself.  
They all are blithe of heart and dight for war,  
Have fame and glory and illumé the world.”

The kings of all the realms were sore amazed  
At heart ; their souls were dark through Núshírwán.  
Ambassadors arrived from Hind and Chín,  
And all kings called down praises on the Sháh ;  
They saw that they could counter not his might,  
And hasted to pay tribute with good will,  
Bare them as underlords to Núshírwán,  
And gathered slaves and purses for his service.  
With golden maces and with golden crowns  
The envoys went upon their way. They reached  
The court-gate of the monarch of the world,  
And brought the toll and tribute of their lords.  
The court appeared adorned like Paradise  
Through all those purses, slaves, and audience-seekers.  
Thus for a while the heavens turned above,  
Consorting with the Fránian king in love.

### § 6

*How Núshírwán went round his Empire and built a Wall  
in the Pass between Irán and Túrán*

1629 Then Núshírwán, the wise, made this resolve—  
That he would sojourn for a while abroad

To make the circuit of the jocund world,  
 And bring whate'er was hidden to the light.  
 He beat the kettledrums, marched forth the host,  
 And sun and moon were both astound at him.  
 What with the troops and jewels, gold and silver,  
 The golden girdles and the golden shields,  
 Thou wouldest have said : " No gold is left within  
 The mines, no gems or lustrous pearls remain ! "

He led his host toward Khurásán at leisure,  
 All heedful of Sásánian precedent.  
 Whenever he passed settlements he pitched  
 His camp and camp-enclosure on the waste,  
 And when the blare of clarions rose there went  
 A herald first afoot who thus proclaimed :—  
 " Ye subjects of the monarch of the world !  
 Is any privily aggrieved at us ?  
 Sleep not despairing of the Sháh, allow not  
 Your souls to fail with care."

He led the host  
 Thus to Gurgán and bare with him the crown  
 And throne of chiefs. Know, justice is no loss :  
 Sháhs should have prowess, rede, and noble birth.

Now when the nightingales were full of song  
 They went thence toward Sarí and toward Ámul,  
 Where hill and plain were clothed with forest-trees,  
 Which filled the Iránian monarch's heart with thought.  
 He left the plain and mounting to the heights,  
 Still seated on his Arab bay looked out  
 O'er mountain and o'er forest, and observed  
 Rose, hyacinth and game, and water there,  
 And thus he said : " O Thou almighty Judge,  
 The World-lord, Conqueror, and Fosterer !  
 Thou art the Maker of the sun and moon,  
 The Guide and the Revealer of the way.  
 Thou mad'st the world of such delightsomeness  
 That we distinguish not 'twixt earth and Heaven.

Whoe'er shall worship any save Thyself  
 Will send his soul to Hell. It was for this  
 That pious Farídún forwent Írán,  
 And made his dwelling here, so passing fair  
 Is this place and delightsome to the heart,  
 Where water is rose-water and the soil  
 Is spicery."

One said : " O righteous judge !  
 If this were not a highway for the Turkmans  
 Our hearts would be not empty of delight,  
 Such are the wealth and glory of this place ;  
 But as it is we cannot raise our necks  
 For constant murders, sack, and harryings.

C. 1630 There are not many left or even few  
 Of fowl or men or cattle on this spot.  
 This is the only route between the realms,  
 And causeth loss to the Íráñian folk.  
 There came much toil and strife in former times,  
 But then the Turkmans' route was through Khárazm.  
 Now for the merchant or the thane to raise  
 His head would be in vain. However, now  
 That thou hast led an army to these parts,  
 Avert this ill from us and bar the way.  
 Thy treasures will be more, not less, thereby :  
 Now is the time to render us a service."

The Sháh, whenas he heard the suppliant,  
 Showered tear-drops from his eyes and thereupon  
 Addressed his minister and said to him :—  
 " A very grievous toil confronteth us.  
 Henceforth 'tis not for us to fare and feast,  
 Or even tender our own crown, for God  
 Will sanction not the wrong in us that we  
 Shall be in happiness while thanes are grieving.  
 Such mountains as these are, such spacious plains,  
 All fit for gardens, grounds, and palaces,  
 And filled with cattle, game, and running water,

So that the soul is freshened by the sight—  
 We must not let the Turkmans lay them waste,  
 And desolate the country of Írán.  
 My kingly office, prudence, policy,  
 Humanity itself, will brook it not.  
 Men will invoke not blessings on our heads  
 What time Írán is lying desolate.”

He bade his minister : “ From Hind and Rúm  
 Select men famous in those cultured lands  
 From all the provinces, foreseeing men,  
 Such masters in their craft as thou canst find,  
 And build me from the sea a lofty wall,  
 On broad foundations and ten lassos high,  
 Of stone and mortar, starting from the deep,  
 And rising to the fountain of the sun.  
 In this way surely we shall form a bar,  
 And loss from foes will come not on Írán.  
 Use no forced labour, ope our treasury,  
 And pay to every one what he demandeth.  
 The labourer, the thane, and man of birth  
 Must not be incommoded by the blast.”

He made an old archmage the overseer,  
 And shut out all the desert by the wall,  
 Wherein they set a mighty iron door,  
 And all the flock grew fearless of the wolf.  
 Of frontier-guards he stationed many a post,  
 And, having made all safe, led on the host.

## § 7

*How Núshírwán chastised<sup>1</sup> the Aláns and the Men of  
 Balích and Gílán*

Thence from the sea he went toward the Aláns,  
 And finding there a ravaged, barren march

C. 1631

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “ rubbed the ears of.”

He thus addressed his chiefs : “ It is a shame  
For regions in Írán to lie thus waste,  
And we must suffer not our foes to say so.”

He chose an envoy from among the troops,  
One, as was fitting, wise and eloquent,  
To whom he said : “ Depart hence with the dawn,  
And say thus to the marchlords of yon folk :—  
‘ From mine intelligencers have I heard  
All that hath passed in public and in private,  
And that ye say : “ Why fear we Núshírwán ?  
As for Írán it is a pinch of dust.”  
Now have we come anigh you and set up  
Our camp, our camp-enclosures, and our court.  
Your wastes are spacious and your mountains high,  
Your troops are armed with arrow, mace, and lasso.  
Your gorges are the place for ambuscades,  
Land, mountain, field and fell, are all your own.  
We—general and soldiers—challenge you,  
We who are strangers in a foreign land.’ ”

The envoy went his way and spake the words  
Dictated by the monarch of Írán.  
The host of the Aláns assembled—all  
The great, the sages, and the counsellors—  
A host that found employ in pillaging,  
And recked but little for the Fránians.  
Írán was wont to stand in awe of them ;  
Folk had no raiment, gold, or silver left,  
And men and women with their babes and beasts  
Were wont to quit their homes and seek the plains.  
The envoy told the Aláns, withholding naught,  
The message of the monarch of the world,  
Whereat the faces of the chiefs grew black ;  
The words of Núshírwán amazed their hearts.  
The great men and the chieftains of that march  
Went forth with contributions and much tribute,  
With slaves and raiment, and with gold and silver,

And many a noble steed, while of the folk  
 All that were men of years and eloquence,  
 And wisdom-seekers, came to Núshírwán,  
 Bewailing their past doings. When they reached  
 The tent-enclosure of the Sháh with presents,  
 And gifts, they cried and wallowed in the dust,  
 Their eyes fulfilled with tears, their hearts with blood.

For shame and self-excusing is no need  
 When wisdom and the valiant are agreed.  
 The prudent Sháh was gracious unto them,  
 And pardoned all that they had done amiss ;  
 Then ordered that upon the wasted lands—  
 The lurking-place of lion and of leopard—  
 They should erect a city with all speed,  
 With room for sowing and for harvesting,  
 The whole surrounded by a lofty wall  
 That ill might not befall from enemies.  
 The Aláns made answer to the noble king,  
 And said : “With earrings on as slaves of thine,  
 And, as the Sháh hath bidden, we will raise  
 The ramparts of a noble seat.”

C. 1632

## The Sháh

Marched thence to Hindústán and sojourned there.  
 At his commandment all folk came to him,  
 Came seeking to ingratiate themselves,  
 And for two miles beside the Indus-bank  
 Were horses, elephants, brocade, and coin.  
 The great men all with honesty of heart  
 And loyalty appeared before the Sháh,  
 Who questioned them and well entreated them,  
 And placed them in accordance to their rank.  
 With jocund heart the Sháh departed thence :  
 Troops, steeds, and elephants fulfilled the world.  
 He went his way, and tidings came to him :—  
 “The world is wasted by the Balúchís,  
 Till from exceeding slaughter, pillaging,

And harrying, the earth is overwhelmed,  
But greater ruin cometh from Gīlān,  
And curses banish blessings."

Then the heart  
Of Núshírwán, the Sháh, was sorrowful,  
And grief commingled with his joy. He said  
To the Iránians : " The Aláns and Hind  
Were, in their terror of our scimitars,  
Like silk. Now our own realm is turned against us :  
Shall we hunt lions and forgo the sheep ? "

One said to him : " The garden hath no rose  
Without a thorn, O king ! So too these marches  
Are ever troublesome and treasure-wasting.  
As for Balúch the glorious Ardshír  
Tried it with all his veteran officers,  
But all his stratagems and artifices,  
His feints, his labours, arms, and fighting failed,  
And though the enterprise succeeded ill  
He cloaked the failure even to himself."

This story of the thane enraged the Sháh,  
Who went upon his way toward Balúch.  
Now when he drew anear those lofty mountains  
He went around them with his retinue,  
And all his host encircled them about,  
And barred the passage e'en to wind and ant.  
The troops, like ants and locusts, occupied  
The mountain-outskirts to the sandy desert.

C. 1633 A herald went his rounds about the host,  
Proclaiming from the mountains, caves, and plains :—  
" Whene'er the Balúchís are seeking food,  
If they be warriors and carry arms,  
However many or however few,  
Let not a single one of them escape."

The troops, ware of the anger of the Sháh,  
Stopped every outlet with their horse and foot ;  
Few of the Balúchís or none survived,

No women, children, warriors, were left.  
 All of them perished by the scimitar,  
 And all their evil doings had an end,  
 The world had quiet from their ravaging :  
 No Balúchí, seen or unseen, remained,  
 While on their mountains, so it came to pass,  
 The herds thenceforward strayed without a guard ;  
 Alike on waste and lofty mountain-top  
 The sheep required no shepherd. All the folk  
 Around thought nothing of past sufferings,  
 And looked on vale and mountain as their home.  
 Thence toward Gilán marched Núshírwán, for there,  
 And in Dílam, was trouble manifest.  
 The army stretched from sea to mountain-top,  
 The air was full of flags, the earth of troops.  
 The army was extended round Gilán,  
 And light departed from the sun and moon.  
 Thus spake the Sháh : “ Among the small and great  
 No trace of Wolf and Lion must be left.”

So mighty was the slaughter in the land  
 That all the region’s face was bathed in blood.  
 At all the slaying, pillaging, and burning  
 The men and women sent up wails of woe.  
 On every side the slain were piled in heaps,  
 The grasses smirched with brains. The warriors—  
 The just, the prudent and the men of weight—  
 Remaining in Gilán bound their own hands,  
 And with their women-folk behind, their children  
 Before them, came lamenting to the king  
 With bosoms rent and dust upon their heads.  
 They all assembled at the monarch’s court  
 With bounden hands and wounded bodies, saying :—  
 “ We have turned back upon our evil courses ;  
 Oh ! that the Sháh would cease from his displeasure !  
 If he is vexed at heart against Gilán  
 We will behead ourselves with our own hands.

It may be that the Sháh then will relent  
When he shall see the heaps of severed heads."

When such a cry rose from the court, and when  
The Sháh had listened to their supplication,  
He pardoned them ; the past was blotted out,  
But he required two hundred hostages  
Both from Gílán and from Dílam that none  
Thereafter might pursue the path of ill.  
He left a paladin with them to stay,  
And, having ordered all things, marched away.

### § 8

*How Munzir, the Arab, came to Núshírwán for Succour  
against the Injustice of Cæsar*

C. 1634

Next from Gilán he marched toward Madá'in,  
Not knowing his troops' number or extent.<sup>1</sup>  
Now as he journeyed on appeared afar  
A boundless host of wielders of the spear.  
A cavalier—one of that great array—  
Approached as quick as dust on their behalf,  
And, having lighted from his charger, said :—  
“ Behold Munzir the Arab.”

When Munzir  
Drew near the Sháh all chiefs made way for him.  
The Sháh saluted him with signs of joy,  
And brightened at his looks. That veteran  
Set loose his tongue, discoursed of Rúm and Cæsar,  
And said : “ If thou art monarch of Irán,  
The guardian and the backbone of the brave,  
Why do the Rúmans lord it so and prance  
Upon the desert of the cavaliers ?  
While if the Sháh be Cæsar's overlord

<sup>1</sup> They were so many.

That haughty potentate should lose his head.  
 Now if the noble Sháh will give permission  
 No more will he behold us asking aid,  
 And in the fight the horsemen of the desert  
 Shall triumph o'er the cavaliers of Rúm."

The Sháh was wroth that Cæsar should exalt  
 His crown, as said Munzir, and, having chosen  
 Among the troops a man of eloquence,  
 And learned in Cæsar's tongue, said thus : " Go thou  
 To Rúm, take not thine ease in peopled parts,  
 And say to Cæsar : ' If thou lackest wisdom  
 Thy brains will sorrow for thy policy.  
 The warrior-lion chasing onager  
 Will batten on them even in a salt-marsh.  
 For thee to have thy just dues from Munzir  
 Sufficeth seeing that Vega is his throne.  
 Discern then 'twixt thy left hand and thy right,  
 And, when thou knowest, claim what march is thine.  
 Since I am the distributor of lands  
 And realms, am highest in the world and chief,  
 My conduct shall be worthy of myself :  
 I will let not the wind blow on Munzir.  
 Since thou hast stretched thy hand upon the Arabs  
 In fight take privy heed for thine own self.  
 Moreover all that sovereignty is mine,  
 And mine is all between the Bull<sup>1</sup> and Pisces.  
 If I shall send an army into Rúm  
 Thy sword of steel will prove a sword of wax.' "<sup>2</sup>

The ambassador came forth from Núshírwán  
 As 'twere a torrent, came and gave the message  
 To Cæsar, but that worthless one recoiled  
 From what was just, replied evasively,  
 Imagining a fall from power remote,  
 And answered thus : " As for that fool Munzir,  
 Take what he stateth at its proper worth.

C. 1635

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 71. <sup>2</sup> Because "múm," wax, rhymes with "Rúm."

If he complaineth out of wantonness,  
 Exaggerating thus the evil done,  
 Or if a single man complain within  
 The desert of the wielders of the spear,  
 I will convert the heights of earth to breadths,  
 And that unwatered desert to a sea."

The envoy heard, came swift as dust, and told  
 The words of Cæsar. Núshírwán enraged  
 Said to his minister : "The brains of Cæsar  
 Are wedded not to wisdom. I will show him  
 Who hath authority, the power to conquer  
 The world, to levy war, and make a pact.  
 His overweening and his haughtiness,  
 His labour, pillaging, and harrying,  
 He shall repent more dearly than the drunkard,<sup>1</sup>  
 That thrusteth both hands in the fire at night."

He then bade blow the trumpets, and a host  
 Was gathered unto him from every side ;  
 The din of tymbals went up from the court-gate,  
 Earth was pitch-hued and air was ebony.  
 He chose of cavaliers from that famed host  
 A hundred thousand armed with scimitars,  
 Entrusted that great army to Munzir,  
 And bade him : "From the desert of the spearmen  
 Lead unto Rúm an army of the brave  
 To set the frontier and the land afire,  
 For youthful monarch though I be and though  
 I am but newly famousd in fight,  
 Yet fear not Rúm or Rúman, thou ! for I  
 Regard the Rúman as a pinch of dust.  
 Now will I send me an ambassador—  
 A man of eloquence—to him. Henceforth,  
 If thou experience naught calamitous,  
 That Cæsar should keep Rúm would pleasure us.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Ending section with P.

## § 9

*The Letter of Sháh Núshírwán to Cæsar of Rúm*

The Sháh then called a scribe that was at court,  
And bade to write a letter unto Cæsar :—<sup>1</sup>

“ From Núshírwán, the Sháh of glorious birth,  
The world-lord and successor of Kubád,<sup>2</sup>  
To Cæsar, the exalted lord of Rúm—  
Guard of the marches of that prosperous land.”

The letter opened with the praise of God  
From whom alone all greatness must be sought—  
“ The Master of the circling sun and moon,  
The Source of victory and mastery,  
Who is above the will of turning heaven  
As touching justice, love, and strife. Though thou  
Art Cæsar and the lord of Rúm dispute not  
Aught with the Arabs, for if thou shalt take  
The sheep out of the clutches of the wolf  
Thou wilt, as thou art ware, have grievous toil ;  
While if thou sendest troops against Munzir  
I will not leave thee host or crown or throne.

If any underling grow masterful  
He shall be punished by our scimitar.  
Step not a single cubit past thy bounds  
If thou desirest that our pact shall stand.  
If thou shalt pass thy bounds we will pass ours,  
And trample under foot thy head and throne.  
The greeting of the lord of diadem  
And might to those that seek not to cause trouble  
By their injustice.”

Unto this they set  
The Sháh’s seal and then chose a cavalier,  
Such as was needful, from the court, a man  
Persuasive, valiant, shrewd, and veteran.

<sup>1</sup> In C. the previous section ends here.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 179, note.

C. 1636

## § 10

*How the Letter of Núshírwán reached Cæsar and how he replied*

The envoy with the letter of the king  
 Came to famed Cæsar, gave it, greeted him,  
 And told him all the mind of Núshírwán.  
 When Cæsar heard and had perused the letter  
 He writhed and was astound. His brow grew wrinkled,  
 His visage wan at what the exalted Sháh  
 Had said. He called a scribe, wrote his reply,  
 And made his meaning clear for good and ill.  
 The letter first grew musky with the ink  
 What time he offered praise to God almighty—  
 “The Artist of the heavens over us,  
 The Source of warfare, peace, and amity.  
 He giveth in the world one man a crown  
 With slaves before him better than himself.  
 Though turning heaven itself be under thee,  
 And Jupiter beneath thy scimitar,  
 Search out thy records, for no son of Rúm  
 E'er hath paid tribute to thy royal race.  
 King as thou art I am no less than thou ;  
 I too possess a head, a crown, and realm.  
 Why must I take so much abuse in fear  
 Of foot of elephant or din of drum ?  
 I now ask you for tribute and for toll,  
 And who is there with power to fight with Rúm ?  
 The doings of Sikandar in Irán  
 Thou knowest, and we claim that noble Sháh.  
 Sikandar's sword is still in evidence,  
 Why pickest thou a quarrel with us thus ?  
 The javelin-wielding horsemen of the waste  
 Have pillaged our possessions in their raids :  
 No longer will we bear their wrongs but raise

The dust in all their borders. Núshírwán  
 Was neither Maker of the sun, nor hath  
 He seized the key of the revolving sky,  
 That there must be no other king of kings,  
 And his will only current in the world."

He gave the envoy no reply in speech,  
 Not recking of the wrath of Núshírwán,  
 But, when he set the seal upon the letter,  
 He spake these words : "Christ and the Cross are  
 with me."

The envoy spent no breath on him, perceiving  
 With grief the answer, and with grief departed ;  
 Swift as a dust-cloud to the Sháh he sped,  
 And told him all that Cæsar purposéd.

### § II

#### *How Núshírwán went to war with Cæsar*

The king, when he had read the letter, raged  
 Against the turn of fortune. Then he called  
 The archmages and the chieftains, one and all,  
 And spake to them at large about that letter.  
 He sat for three days with his counsellors  
 And paladins—the shatterers of hosts—  
 And on the fourth day was resolved to lead  
 His troops to fight with Cæsar. At the gate  
 Arose the blare of trumpets with the din  
 Of brazen cymbals and of drums. He paused not,  
 But went to battle in a righteous cause,  
 Assembled troops, made up the baggage-train,  
 And called on God, the Giver of all good.  
 A dust rose such that thou hadst said : "The sky  
 Hath smirched its visage in a sea of pitch !"  
 He clad the surface of the earth with horse-shoes,

While silken flags incarnadined the air.  
 There was no room on earth e'en for a gnat,  
 No room for wind left in the firmament.  
 The hubbub of the horsemen and the dust  
 Of elephants made earth seem like the Nile.  
 The world-lord marched with Káwa's flag, with crown,  
 And golden boots. The army's din was heard  
 Two miles away. Before the host were drums  
 And elephants, and on this wise the Sháh,  
 With chiefs behind him and with chiefs before him,  
 Sped onward to Ázar Ábádagán.

Now when his eyes beheld Ázargashasp  
 Afar he lighted down and went afoot,  
 Requested of his pious minister  
 The sacred twigs and bathed his cheeks with tears.

C. 1638 He made his entry of the Fane of Fire  
 With wailing. They set up a throne inlaid  
 With gold, and spread thereon the Zandavasta,  
 Wherefrom an archimagus read aloud,  
 According to the ritual, while priests  
 And chieftains wallowed in the dust before it,  
 And rent their skirts. The great men showered jewels  
 Upon the book and muttered laud thereon.

The Sháh approaching offered praise and prayer  
 Before the Maker of the world, and asked  
 For victory, for mastery, and guidance  
 Upon the path of justice. He bestowed  
 Gifts on the attendants and on mendicants  
 Wherever seen. He pitched his tent before  
 The Fire-fane, and his troops arrayed their ranks  
 Upon each side. He called a prudent scribe,  
 Discoursed at large, dictating fitting words,  
 Bade him address by letter graciously  
 The marchlords of the country of Írán,  
 And say : "Fear God, be vigilant, and guard  
 The world against the enemy. Ye lords

And paladins ! be just to those beneath you,  
 And keep such forces as will foil the foe.  
 None while my standard shall be out of sight  
 Must think to slumber in security."

As from the Fane of Fire he marched towards Rúm  
 The bruit of him was spread throughout the land,  
 And all the faithful lieges flocked to him  
 Until the warriors<sup>1</sup> hid the fields and fells,  
 And many an aspirant came with gifts  
 And offerings to the king. Where'er he lighted  
 There reached him salutations and addresses  
 From all sides, while where'er he led his host  
 He still had feast and chase before his eyes,  
 And 'twas the custom for a thousand chiefs  
 To come each night to banquet with the king.  
 When he was near the frontier he made ready  
 For war and in the first place paid his troops.  
 His general was Shírwí, son of Bahrám—  
 A man of rede and self-possessed in battle.  
 He gave the army's left wing to Farhád,  
 To whom he proffered many prudent counsels.  
 Ustád, son of Barzín, was on the right,  
 Garshasp, the atheling, was o'er the baggage.  
 Mihrán<sup>2</sup> was at the centre, for his heart  
 Was steadfast in the fray. The outpost duty  
 The Sháh gave to Hurmuzd, son of Kharrád,  
 Enjoining wisdom to his soul and heart,  
 While everywhere intelligencers went  
 That nothing might be hidden. Then the Sháh  
 Called and advised his veterans much and well.  
 He said to them : " Ye numbers numberless  
 Of men of high estate and warriors !  
 If any one of you shall quit my way,  
 Or draw a breath without my privity,  
 Shall cause affliction to the mendicants,

C. 1639

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 185.

Or to the mighty men possessed of treasure,  
 Shall injure any tree that beareth fruit,  
 Or do an act unseemly, trample down  
 The cornfields, or leave station to advance  
 Before the troops, I swear by God, the Lord  
 Of Mars, of Saturn, and of Sol, who gave me  
 The diadem and might, forthwith to cleave him  
 Asunder with my sword though like a star  
 He hide him in the clouds. I am the scout  
 Before the host, aspirant, central stay,  
 Guard of the elephants, of troops, and baggage,  
 Am now upon the left, now on the right.  
 I fare o'er land and sea, I seek no rest  
 And sleep in war."

A herald named Shírzád

Laid up at heart the words of Núshírwán,  
 And made in haste the circuit of the host,  
 Went round about tent and pavilion,  
 And cried : " Ye troops in numbers numberless !  
 The bidding of the watchful Sháh is this :  
 Whoever, save in justice, love, and wisdom,  
 Shall look upon this gloomy earth of ours,  
 Men shall pour out his blood thereon as one  
 That hath departed from the will of God."

A proclamation did not satisfy  
 The Sháh who night and day employed himself  
 In going on his rounds about the host,  
 Observing everything both good and bad,  
 Receiving tidings of the world's affairs,  
 And slighting nothing whether good or ill.  
 When any soldier died upon the march  
 The Sháh prepared a charnel at the place,  
 And all the man's belongings—silver, gold,  
 His bow, his helm, his lasso and his belt,  
 Or good or bad, were buried with the dead,  
 Who in the grave had still his goods with him.

The world was lost in wonder at the height  
 Of majesty attained by Núshírwán.  
 In every place where he engaged in battle  
 He showed his counsel, caution, and good sense,  
 And used to call a trusty messenger,  
 Who went to foes preparing for resistance,  
 And if they entered on the path of right  
 The wise Sháh treated them with clemency ;  
 But, if they fought, that valiant Crocodile  
 Was very wroth, went forth to fight with them,  
 And gave their fields and crops to spoil. He wooed  
 The world with justice and the scimitar.  
 The conduct of the Sháh was like the sun's,  
 Which shineth in its course on wet and dry,  
 Denying unto none its radiance,  
 When banishing the clouds from circling heaven,  
 But giving all its justice and its bounty,  
 Its hue and scent, its lustrous pearls and waters,  
 Obscuring unto none its light and height,  
 But joying hearts and simply shining on.  
 The king of kings by justice, policy,  
 And Grace took all the world beneath his wings ;  
 Both war and bounty were mere play to him,  
 And thus it was that he attained his greatness.  
 Confronted by the elephant and lion  
 He ne'er deferred the combat for a day,  
 And when a foe was instant to appear  
 In helm and mail before the host for fight,  
 Him would they slaughter or in scorn would fling  
 Bound in the dungeons of the conquering king.

C. 1640

## § 12

*How Núshírwán took divers Strongholds in his  
March to Rúm*

He marched upon this wise until he reached  
 A busy city which was named Shúráb,  
 Wherein Gushtásp dwelt when he went to Rúm.<sup>1</sup>  
 The Sháh beheld it rising in the air,  
 Fulfilled with men and goods, with harp and song,  
 With stone-foundations springing from the deep,  
 And battlements up-builded to the clouds.  
 The troops beleaguered it but saw no means  
 Of access to the gate. The Sháh set up  
 The catapults on all four sides, and then  
 The ramparts of the Christian crumbled down.  
 From every quarter came the breath of doom ;  
 Men saw no place of refuge or escape,  
 And when the shining sun set in the sky  
 The castle-walls were level with the plain.  
 The shouts of cavaliers, the dust of troops,  
 And fume of fire ascended to the moon.  
 The strong-hold was all trunkless heads and feet,  
 Elsewhere were headless trunks. The cries for quarter,  
 And women's shrieks, rose o'er the drummers' din.  
 The magnates eminent for wealth or valour  
 They bound and laid upon the elephants,  
 While wails of woe and cries for quarter rose.  
 The Sháh spared none in battle-tide, he spared not  
 His treasures and dñárs in banquet-time.  
 He marched thence till another hold appeared,  
 Wherein were Cæsar's treasures, and it had  
 A mighty man for castellan. 'Twas called  
 Áráyish-i-Rúm till that Núshírwán  
 Ill-ended it. The watchful Sháh surveyed

That hold, unentered yet by hostile troops,  
 And bade shoot showers of arrows till the air  
 Was thick with them as 'tis with hail in spring.  
 The chieftains bravely stormed the walls and flung  
 Fire on the city and the citadel,  
 Wherein no living thing remained alive  
 Or, in the country round, a thorn or briar.  
 The Sháh gave Cæsar's treasures up to spoil,  
 And all the crowns and purses to his troops.  
 He brought the Day of Doom upon that city,  
 And all folk fled. Men, women, children, wailed  
 Till old and young assembling came before  
 The noble Sháh and cried aloud for succour :—  
 “The ministers, the treasurers, and treasure,  
 Are thine, and thine the gain and toil in Rúm ;  
 We only beg of thee to spare our lives,  
 We bondslaves of the Glory of thy crown.”

The Sháh bade cease the slaughtering, and he  
 Provided for these people bounteously.

## § 13

*The Battle of Núshírwán with Farfúriyús, the Leader of Cæsar's Host, the Victory of Núshírwán, and his Capture of Kálíniyús and Antákiya*

Departing thence the Sháh led on his troops,  
 And left Áráyish-i-Rúm in his rear.  
 One came and told him : “Cæsar hath dispatched  
 A host and lo ! it draweth nigh.”

On hearing

Of that great power's approach—all spears and mail—  
 The Sháh proclaimed the tidings to the troops  
 That all the host might be prepared. They marched  
 As 'twere an iron mountain ; battle-cries

Ascended and the blast of clarions.  
 A courier with tidings from the scouts  
 Appeared before the monarch of the world,  
 And told him : “ Cæsar hath dispatched an army  
 Formed of his famous men and warriors.  
 Their leader is a mighty paladin,  
 Whose name in Rúman is Farfúriyús—  
 A haughty cavalier with trump and drum—  
 And all his troops long for the fight like wolves.”

While thus he spake before the watchful Sháh  
 The dust-clouds of the advancing host appeared.  
 He smiled and answered thus the messenger :—  
 “ The thing is not unknown to us, for we  
 Already have prepared the host for battle :  
 Such thoughts ne'er have been absent from our minds.”

Then with his lips afoam he gave command  
 That all the army should draw up in line.  
 C. 1642 So host with host confronted, and the air  
 Was hindered in its passage by the dust.  
 It was a glorious gathering of troops,  
 Proud chiefs and wielders of the scimitar,  
 All with loins tightly girded for the fray—  
 The great, the sages, and the seed of kings.  
 The swords of all were reeking with fresh blood,  
 And trenchant of the clouds. The enemy  
 Had no more respite than the quarry hath  
 From leopard springing. Rúman slain lay heaped  
 On all sides while the wounded turned from fight.  
 Farfúriyús himself thus stricken fled  
 The field with banner rent and drums o'erthrown.  
 The horsemen of Frán like pards, when they  
 Clutch on the waste the mountain-sheep, pursued  
 The Rúmans, sweeping them from dale and desert.  
 The Sháh marched on again equipped for war,  
 The soldiers all with mace and sword in hand.  
 He led his army on along a plain

Until another lofty hold appeared—  
 A citadel with soldiers, trump, and drum,  
 And hight Kálínyús. The eagle saw not  
 Its battlements, a full moat girdled it,  
 And all around it stretched a fair domain  
 Of halls and gardens, grounds and palaces.  
 'Twas strongly garrisoned by Rúman troops—  
 All famous men and eager for the fight.  
 The Sháh encamped his powers two leagues away,  
 Earth blackened with the dust-clouds of the host,  
 And war-cries went up from Kálínyús—  
 A clamour that bedwarfed the tymbals' din.  
 The Sháh marked well that city whereunto  
 His troops for ever thronged increasingly ;  
 They battled at the gates and showered down  
 Their shafts and hand-grenades, and when bright Sol  
 'Gan pale, and half revolving heaven was dark,  
 No portion of the castle-walls remained :  
 That city was all level with the ground.  
 Then from the Sháh's gate proclamation issued :—  
 “ Ye famous men of the Íránian host !  
 Come from the city, every man, and pass  
 The night upon the plain. If any cry  
 Shall rise from women and from agéd folk,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or any sound of pillage, rioting,  
 And combating, shall reach mine ears at night,  
 So that but one complain of evil usage,  
 As soon as such appealeth ye shall see  
 The skin of the offender stuffed with hay.”<sup>2</sup>

When Sol was stretching out its hand from Cancer,  
 Had put away fatigue and banished sleep,  
 The tymbals sounded at the monarch's gate,  
 Those that were highest in esteem set forth,  
 And from that hold and seat the men and women  
 Assembled at the gate of Núshírwán :

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 359.

“No cavalier of all our warriors  
 Is left,” they said, “or magnate in this city ;  
 They all, though guiltless, have been slain or wounded  
 And it is time for pardon from the Sháh,  
 Because God’s justice never will approve  
 That women, babes, and elders should be captive.  
 The citadel and city’s walls are such  
 That henceforth thou wilt see but thorn-brakes here.  
 Since Cæsar was the offender how are we—  
 The people of Kálíniyús—to blame ? ”

The Sháh gave pardon to those Rúmans : both  
 The guilty and the innocent escaped.  
 He left with them an ample store of wealth,  
 And marched his army with all speed away ;  
 But all the folk that he saw fit for arms  
 They bound on elephants and carried off.  
 Then news to Antákiya came : “The Sháh  
 Is on his way with elephants and troops.”

Now at that city was a boundless host  
 Of Rúman warriors and mighty men.  
 The Sháh accorded to them three days’ grace  
 That he might war not on them wrongfully,  
 But on the fourth his host came mountain-like—  
 The warriors of Írán in close array—  
 While for the sake of women, children, land,  
 And wealth the cavaliers of Rúm advanced.  
 They fought three mighty battles in three days,  
 But on the fourth day when the sun arose  
 The marches of that prosperous land lay open,  
 The Írániacs saw no Rúman cavaliers,  
 The soldiers took possession of the place,  
 And filled it till there was no room to stand.  
 The great men that had thrones and coronets,  
 And those that were the treasurers of Cæsar,  
 Gave up the treasure to the Sháh—the world-lord—  
 The treasure unto him that bare the toil.

The Iránians set in bonds on elephants  
 All that were warriors among that folk.  
 The Sháh dispatched to Madá'in the captives,  
 And all the wealth of Cæsar, then went round  
 The city and beheld a country-side  
 More brilliant than the orbéd moon. The gardens,  
 The parks, and streams, restored old age to freshness  
 And youth. The king addressed his nobles thus :—  
 “Can this be Antákiya or young spring ?  
 Whoe'er hath seen not jocund Paradise  
 Whereof the soil is musk, the bricks are gold,  
 Whose waters are rose-water and trees jewels,  
 Whose country is the sky, whose heaven the sun,  
 Should look on this fresh land, and may it be—  
 This land of Rúm—in full prosperity.”

## § 14

*How Núshírwán built the City of Zib-i-Khusrau in the Likeness  
 of Antákiya and settled the Rúman Captives therein*

Then Núshírwán gave orders to construct  
 A city having palaces and streams,  
 Like Antákiya, radiant as a lamp—  
 All rosaries and mansions, parks and gardens.  
 The great men, bright of heart and happy, called it  
 Zib-i-Khusrau.<sup>1</sup> "Twas like the jocund spring—  
 A paradise all colour, scent, and beauty.  
 The captives taken in the towns of Rúm,  
 Whose hands and feet were galled with heavy bonds,  
 Were set at large by Núshírwán's command,  
 And sent to dwell in joy in that new city.  
 He said : “ We have erected this new seat—  
 All gardens, rosaries, and palaces—

C. 1644

<sup>1</sup> The Ornament of Khusrau.

That each might have a dwelling to his mind  
And worthy of his name.”

He gave to each  
Goods, and the earth was decked like Paradise.  
At sight of all the mansions, streets, and marts  
Thou wouldest have said : “ Each space is occupied.”  
A clamorous cordwainer came and said :—  
“ O unjust Sháh ! there was a mulberry  
Within my dwelling at Kálíniyús  
Before my courtyard ; from Zíb-i-Khusrau  
I have not any such advantages,  
For there is no such tree before my door.”

So Núshírwán bade men to plant green trees  
Before the door of that misfortuned one.

The Sháh then chose a Christian unto whom  
He gave authority, wealth, troops, and said :—  
“ Zíb-i-Khusrau is thine and thine the charge  
Of all the stranger-folk and their new home.  
Be like a tree that beareth fruit and be  
The city’s sire at whiles, at whiles its son.  
Be bountiful and beautify the place,  
Not covetous, and keep the mean in all.”

The Sháh marched forth from Antákiya, leaving  
A Christian and experienced man in charge.

Farfúriyús thereafter brought to Cæsar  
Intelligence about Kálíniyús,  
And said to him : “ The experienced Núshírwán  
Came in his state with troops and elephants.  
So mighty is his host that seas and mountains  
Are all confounded by the horses’ dust.”

Then Cæsar writhed for that which he had spoken,  
And called to him his prudent chiefs. His heart  
Was full of fear because of Núshírwán ;  
All day and through three watches of the night  
He canvassed what to do. Thus spake a priest :—  
“ Thou’rt ill-advised because thou hast not power

To fight with Núshírwán. The foe will raise  
 The dust from this fair realm and bring to naught  
 The achievements of the Cæsars. In debate  
 The feeble-tongued endangereth the state."

## § 15

*How Cæsar wrote to Núshírwán and sent Tribute*

Now Cæsar heard this and his heart was troubled,  
 His counsels were o'ercast by Núshírwán.  
 He chose of the philosophers of Rúm  
 From regions scathless of the enemy,  
 A man of eloquence and understanding,  
 While of the priests three score unsmirched in soul  
 And wisdom volunteered. He sent the Sháh  
 An embassage. Those magnates took their way.  
 Their leader was that man of wits, Mihrás—  
 A warrior old in wisdom, young in years.  
 There went before them treasures of all kinds  
 Past reckoning, while Cæsar, who repented  
 His language in the past, dispatched no stint  
 Of adulation, counsels, and fair words,  
 With heavy tribute and with hostages  
 Both of his own and of his nobles' kin.  
 Mihrás, when he had come to Núshírwán,  
 Pronounced his praises in the Rúman tongue,  
 And thou hadst said : " So shrewd and just is he,  
 He will produce stars from his sleeves ! " 'Twas thus  
 He spake to Núshírwán : " Set not, O king !  
 Such value on the world. Thou art in Rúm  
 Now and Írán is void ; it hath not worth  
 Or Glory. So, when Cæsar is away  
 From Rúm, this country valueth not one gnat.  
 The worth deriveth wholly from the man ;  
 When he is lost the value is lost too.

If this commotion be but for wealth's sake—  
 That ruiner of wisdom and contentment—  
 Lo ! I have brought thee all the wealth of Rúm,  
 For more than land and treasure is a soul  
 Serene.”

The king's heart, when he heard this, grew  
 As jocund as a garden in the spring,  
 And he accepted what the envoy brought—  
 The purses of gold coin, and hostages—  
 Gave commendations to the ambassadors,  
 Enlarging on the value of the gifts,  
 And said : “ O clear in wisdom ! any one  
 Whom wisdom feedeth is a mighty man.  
 If all the soil of Rúm were turned to gold  
 Thou wouldest outvalue still that noble land.”

C. 1646 They set as tribute on those fields and fells  
 A hundred ox-hides brimming with dínárs  
 To be dispatched by Cæsar to the king  
 Each year with other gifts and offerings.  
 His troops were not to occupy Yaman,  
 Or to require aught of the people there.  
 Therewith was heard the blare of trump and clash  
 Of brazen cymbals, and the prudent world-lord  
 Led back his host. He went his way to Shám,  
 And tarried there awhile. He brought with him  
 So many implements of war and troops,  
 So many captives, purses, crowns, and thrones,  
 That earth's back bent beneath the elephants,  
 And purses full of drachms. When he resolved  
 To quit that land he set in charge thereof  
 Shírwí, son of Bahrám, and said : “ Demand  
 The tribute due from Cæsar and accord not  
 Remission for a month or day.”

Shírwí,  
 Who kissed the ground, blessed and addressed the  
 Shah :—

“ Mayst thou be happy and victorious,  
And may the royal Tree ne’er pale its leaves.”

When at the monarch’s portal had begun  
The drum-roll flag and troops fared toward Arman.

## § 16

*The Birth of Núshzád, the Son of Núshírwán, by a  
Woman who was a Christian*

Like to the sun was Núshírwán, the king—

The world’s hope and its fear. Just as above  
Sol speedeth on its pathway carrying

A sword in this hand and in that hand love,  
Is all relentless in its hour of rage,

But in its day of ruth all clemency,  
So was this Sháh of royal lineage,

Who had adorned the world with equity.  
Know this—in my regard the monarch’s state

And subject’s, if they holy be and pure,  
Requireth of necessity a mate,

Dress, provand, and a privacy secure ;  
While if the wife be pious and discreet

A heaped-up treasure will she prove, and all  
The more if locks musk-scented to her feet

Descent, and she be more than common tall,  
Wise, learned, well counselled, chaste, and can express  
Herself in fair discourse with gentleness.

The noble Sháh possessed a wife like this,  
In height a cypress and in looks a moon,  
This Moon-face was a Christian, and her beauty  
Engrossed the tongues of all. She bare a babe  
Sun-faced, out-shining Venus in the sky.

The noble mother called the child Núshzád,  
And no fierce blast assailed that lovely boy.

C. 1647

He grew up as he were a straight-stemmed cypress—  
 A youth of parts, the glory of the realm.  
 He knew of Hell, the path to Paradise,  
 Of Christ, of Esdras, and Zarduhsh, but he,  
 Believing not the Zandavasta, bathed  
 His visage in the fount of Christ, preferring  
 His mother's to his father's Faith : the age  
 Was lost in wonderment at him. The king  
 Was grievously concerned about his son,  
 Because that Rose bare only fruit of thorns.  
 They shut the portal of Núshzád's fair palace,  
 And there imprisoned him. His prison-house  
 Was at Gund-i-Shápúr<sup>1</sup> far from his home  
 And father. Many criminals and captives  
 Were with him in that city and in ward.  
 Now when the Sháh was on his way from Rúm  
 The turmoil and the journey tried him sorely ;  
 So weak was he that he could hold no court.  
 One bare the tidings to Núshzád and told him :—  
 “The Glory of the empire is bedimmed ;  
 The watchful world-lord Núshírwán is dead,  
 Bequeathing to another earth and time.”

His father's death rejoiced Núshzád. Oh ! may  
 No pleasure and enjoyment e'er be his !

He that doth joy when just kings pass away  
 Must have a gloomy temper. As to this

A famous ancient said : “If thou art glad  
 At my decease see that thou never die.”

From death thou know'st no succour can be had,  
 The past is one here with futurity ;

But never death will wreck the soul of one  
 Whose toil hath favour in the sight of God.

Call we a reprobate and fool that son  
 Who in his father's footsteps hath not trod.

Wet be the seed of colocynth or dry

<sup>1</sup> Kand-i-Shápúr in the text. For this city see p. 219.

It will not savour musk, then where the need  
 That it should change from what should spring  
 thereby  
 By nature if the gardener sow its seed ?  
 When any plant is predisposed to earth,  
 It parteth with the sunshine and pure air,  
 Therefrom no foliage or fruit hath birth,  
 It liveth for the earth and dieth there.

## § 17

*The Sickness of Núshírwán and the Sedition of Núshzád*

I have made mention of Núshzád. Take heed

That thou quit not the path of equity.

If heaven possessed a father then indeed

He would resemble Núshírwán, so why

Should his own son quit the paternal way,

And seek the royal dignity and throne ?

Accord thine ear to all that I shall say,

And I will keep back nothing, O my son !

I have well ordered that I did receive

From rustic bard, and by that token too

Am fain some memory of myself to leave,

So be the honour unto whom 'tis due.

This is my wish that after I am dead

My fame as poet evermore shall last.

On this wise spake a Persian bard whose head

A hundred years and twenty had o'erpast :—

“ He that is hostile to the world's great king

Not of man's stock but Áhriman's must be.”

Now of Núshzád they tell that very thing

As handed down by ancient legendry.

Whenas the son of Núshírwán had heard :—

“ The throne of that right royal Tree is void,”

C. 1648

He oped his palace-door, and from all quarters  
 Troops gathered unto him—all that had 'scaped  
 From wisdom's bonds and had been put in ward  
 By Núshírwán. Núshzád unchained the mad,  
 And all the city was in consternation ;  
 But he assembled of the citizens  
 All that were Christians, whether priests or prelate:,  
 Assembled many haughty cavaliers  
 And swordsmen, while his mother gave him wealth—  
 The treasures lavished on her by the Sháh.  
 There gathered to him thirty thousand men,  
 All famous and prepared to fight. He took  
 The cities round ; his fame was noised abroad.  
 He wrote a letter to his kinsman <sup>1</sup> Cæsar,  
 Made known his dark designs, and said : “ Arise  
 O king ! for thou art lord, friend, of one Faith  
 With me, and Cæsar. As 'twere Rúm, Írán,  
 Its worship and its settlements, are thine,  
 My father hath been sick and now is dead,  
 His wakeful fortune hath been overthrown.”

The tidings reached the towns of Madá'in  
 Of what the son of Núshírwán had done,  
 Whereat the warden of that march dispatched  
 To Núshírwán a cavalier to whom  
 He told what he had heard and what was secret.  
 The messenger went like a rapid stream,  
 And came to Núshírwán to whom he gave  
 The letter, telling all that he had heard,  
 And of the overt actions of Núshzád.  
 The Sháh, when he had listened and had read  
 The letter, grieved thereat and was confounded,  
 Held session with the noble archimates,  
 Debating much with them in privacy,  
 And, when the consultation reached its end  
 In resolution, bade a scribe attend.

<sup>1</sup> In the Faith. Cf. p. 269.

## § 18

*The Letter of Núshírwán to Rám Barzín, the Warden of the March of Mada'in, respecting the Taking of Núshzád*

The Sháh, both seared and sore, with frowning face      C. 1649

And sighing lips, then had this letter written

Wherein he first of all gave praise to Him,

Who fashionéd the heavens, time, and earth,

The Artificer of Sun and Moon and Saturn,

The Illuminer of Grace, of crown, and throne :—

“ From worthless stubble up to elephant

And lion, from the dust on emmet’s foot

Up to the Nile, though men shall roam from earth

To turning heaven they roam beneath God’s sway.

No limit can be seen to His behest,

And none will rob Him of the sovereignty.

Of that unpleasing letter have I heard,

Sent by that most injurious son of mine,

And of the criminals who brake from ward,

And are assembled now about Núshzád.

’Twere better one should quit the world than see

A day like this, for all are born to die ;

First Núshírwán and then Núshzád must go.

From gnat and ant e’en to rhinoceros.

And elephant, none can escape the claws

And beak of death. If earth revealed its secrets,

Displaying everything from first to last,

Its bosom would be found fulfilled with kings,

Its breast with blood of cavaliers, its skirts

With men of lore, the creases of its robe

With fair-cheeked dames. Then wherefore set a crown

Or helmet on thy head when death’s plumed shaft

Will pierce them both ? No one rejoiceth much

At death of son, albeit all must die ;

But as for those consorting with Núshzád,

Who reckon on the death of Núshírwán,  
 The death of them would be a cause for joy  
 If but Núshzád should 'scape the evil day.  
 Moreover none but misbegotten knaves  
 Would count upon the death of righteous Sháhs.  
 Now though Núshzád hath turned his head from us,  
 In that the Dív thus hath conspired with him,  
 His purpose is not firm in this regard ;  
 He was inflamed when he obtained his wish.  
 He could not have the post as well as we,  
 And thus was ruined by a false report,  
 For had the crown been void of Núshírwán  
 Núshzád had been the glory of the realm.  
 Still such an act is worthy of his Faith,  
 And suited to an evil soul like his.

C. 1650 I am not moved or fearful in this matter,  
 In that our son's religion is impure :  
 Moreover for the wealth that he hath wrecked,  
 That matter weigheth nothing on my heart ;  
 While as for all that have combined with him,  
 And banished from their hearts their awe of us—  
 The ill-doers, the malignant, and base-born,  
 Unworthy to be subjects to myself—  
 We look upon them also with contempt :  
 Let not their doings make thy heart afraid.  
 My fear is of the Master of the world,  
 Who is in wisdom wiser than the wise.  
 We must not grow unthankful in our souls  
 To God who is omniscient in good.  
 Me hath He given triumph and success,  
 Grace and the diadem of king of kings,  
 And had my praise been worthy of His gifts  
 It would have bettered my prosperity.  
 My son hath found a home and rest elsewhere ;  
 No single drop of him came from my loins.  
 With his awakening my foe arrived,

And, I do fear me, toil. Still if the World-lord  
 Hath no occasion to be wroth with me  
 I reck not of such things. In my regard  
 All they that are confederate with my son  
 Are vile and despicable. 'Tis his letter  
 That, if it bringeth Cæsar, will befoul  
 My stream. The twain must be akin, methinketh,  
 Since they are one in Faith and policy.  
 The man that quitteth his forefathers' Faith  
 Is one whose wits are much to seek. That son  
 Is best who is of one Faith, not at war,  
 With his own sire. Albeit though that insensate  
 Turn from the right no lip must ope to curse him.  
 To curse him is in essence to curse us,  
 Because he is of our own flesh and blood.  
 Array the host, take order for the war,  
 But act with moderation and hold back,  
 While if the matter cometh to a pass,  
 And if he offer battle, be not fierce.  
 To capture him is better than to slay :  
 Perchance he will turn back from evil doing,  
 And then the stream that reared that noble Cypress  
 Must come not on it in a bath of dust ;  
 But if he hold his honoured person cheaply,  
 If that tall Cypress shall demean itself,  
 And if he spurn the pillow of delight,  
 Withhold not thou the mace and scimitar.  
 A man of rank indulging base desires  
 Can not be freed from that propensity,  
 And such a high-born man is base indeed  
 When he doth fight the monarch of the world.  
 Fear not to slay him if he would pour out  
 His own head's blood upon the dust. He hasteth  
 To give his faith to Cæsar and put off  
 Allegiance to our crown, whereby his greatness  
 Hath grown vile, wretched, and calamitous,

And he hath chosen ruin from high heaven.  
 In this regard said Mihr-i-Núsh—a sage  
 Who worshipped God and wore the woollen vest :—  
 ‘The man that joyeth in a father’s death,  
 May his be neither happiness nor breath.’  
 Seek not for light from darkness, else wilt thou  
 But mingle fire and water in the stream.  
 Man’s only rest is when his toil is done :  
 It is fate’s law and we must acquiesce.  
 Be not in friendship with the turning sky,  
 For whiles thou art the kernel, whiles the shell.  
 Why seek from its pomegranate hue and scent,  
 For it will rob thee of them both at sight ?  
 Whene’er the turning sky exalteth thee,  
 Then is thy time for travail, fear, and loss.  
 As for the soldiers that are with Núshzád,  
 And err so greatly from the path of duty,  
 Know that they are but wind and sport to us,  
 The mockery of the wise, no mystery.  
 As for the Christians that are in his host,  
 And have revolted for religion’s sake,  
 The regimen of Christ is such that they  
 Are frightened if one lifteth up one’s voice,<sup>1</sup>  
 Desert his precepts and his path, and end  
 By turning into foemen of the Cross.  
 As for the other folk—the common herd,  
 Ill-taught, ill-minded, and adventurous—  
 They will not fright the heart of any man :  
 Their counsel and a breath of air are one.  
 Now if Núshzád be taken in the fight,  
 Discourse not with him touching these affairs ;  
 His person must not suffer injury,  
 His raiment must not show the rents of blows,  
 Because his women-folk will slay themselves.  
 His palace will afford the best of prisons

<sup>1</sup> The Persian word for a Christian also means a coward. Cf. p. 219.

Both for himself and those that follow him.  
 Bar not to him the portal of my treasures,  
 Albeit one so dear hath grown so vile,  
 And as for raiment, victuals, tapestries,  
 And carpets there must be no stint at all,  
 For he is fitted but for things like these.  
 As for those marchlords of the Iránians—  
 Those that have girded up their loins with him—  
 When thou hast conquered do not hesitate,  
 But cleave them through the middle with the sword,  
 For all that are the great king's enemies  
 Thou rightly flingest to the crocodiles.  
 Besides these, all that are opposed to me  
 At heart—the seed of wicked Áhriman—  
 Who have forgotten all our benefits,  
 Thou now wilt test in dealing with Núshzád.  
 All acted as our watchmen heretofore,  
 And were in terror of our punishments.  
 For those on-lookers who have vilified,  
 And wagged their tongues against, Núshzád, know thou  
 That they have in especial cursed ourselves,  
 Preparing trouble in mine evil day.  
 Do not thou too as they ; thus foemen speak.  
 Unworthy as he is he is mine own,  
 Such is the truthful witness of my heart.  
 The tongue of each man that hath spoken ill,  
 Or acted with injustice toward him, brand  
 In presence of the folk. May such an one  
 Have neither tongue nor mouth. As for the man  
 That warreth to o'erthrow the Sháh, employing  
 Guile, enmity, hostility, and faith  
 In Áhriman, such, as the famed Sháh's foe,  
 Must not be suffered in the realm.”

They set

The Sháh's own seal upon the letter. Then  
 The messenger departed with all speed,

V. 1652

And, when to Rám Barzín he made his way,  
Told all that he had heard the great king say.

## § 19

*How Rám Barzín fought with Núshzád, and how Núshzád  
was slain*

That done, he gave to Rám Barzín the letter  
With its behests for dealing with Núshzád,  
To levy troops, make war, and banish ruth.  
When the old man had read it, and had heard  
The messenger at large, the din of tymbals  
Arose at cock-crow at the palace-portal,  
A mighty host marched forth from Madá'in,  
And Rám Barzín went swiftly to the war.  
News reached Núshzád who called and paid his host,  
While all the Christians and grandees of Rúm  
That dwelt along the march of that fair land  
Assembled with Shammás as general :  
Those warriors' hands all had been bathed in blood.  
A shout rose from the portal of Núshzád,  
And then the army, like a wind-tossed sea,  
Moved from the city out upon the plain,  
Their heads all war, their hearts revenge and venom.  
When Rám Barzín beheld that army's dust  
He blew the trumpets and arrayed the host.  
The dust of cavaliers, the charge of chieftains,  
The brandishing of mighty maces, rent  
The hearts of flints ; none saw the bright sun's face.  
Then in the centre of the host Núshzád  
Set on his head a Rúman helm. His host  
Was full of Christian clericals from Rúm ;  
The soil was hidden by their horses' hoofs.  
Thou wouldst have said : “ Earth seetheth, and the air  
Is shrieking over it.”

A warrior,

Beclad in mail and hight Pírúz the old,  
 Came boldly forth and cried : " O famed Núshzád !  
 Who wantonly hath turned thy head from right ?  
 Contend not with the army of the king  
 Because thou wilt repent thee of this strife.  
 Thou hast abjured the Faith of Gaiúmart,  
 The pathway of Húshang and Tahmúras.  
 The arch-deceiver Christ was put to death  
 Because he had renounced the Faith of God ;  
 So choose not him, of all that founded Faiths,  
 Who so mistook the aspect of his work,  
 For if the Grace of God had shone in him  
 How could the Jews have gained the upper hand ?  
 Heard hast thou what thy sire, that noble man,  
 The world-lord, did to Cæsar and to Rúm,  
 Yet now thou wouldest contend with him and raise  
 Thy head to heaven ! For all thy moon-like mien,  
 Thy Grace and stature, neck, limbs, hands, and  
 mace,  
 I see no wisdom with thee anywhere,  
 Such recklessness possesseth thy dark soul !  
 Woe for this head of thine, crown, name, and birth,  
 Which now thou wouldest abandon to the blast !  
 For son to seek his living father's throne,  
 How should this be ? 'Tis neither use nor right.  
 To seek the crown, if he be dead, is well ;  
 To seek to fight him now is criminal.  
 Save thou be snorting elephant or lion  
 Thou canst not match Sháh Núshírwán, and though  
 I have not seen, O prince ! a bridle-hand  
 Like thine limned in the palace of the Sháhs,  
 Such foot and stirrups, such a breast and neck,  
 Such ardour in the fight and such a mace,  
 Though painter never looked on such a picture,  
 Or any age on such a prince, yet burn not  
 The soul of Núshírwán by childishness,

Or stultify the world-illumining crown,  
 For hostile howsoe'er a son may be  
 His father will lament when he is slain.  
 Dismount, ask quarter of the Sháh, and fling  
 This mace and Rúman helmet to the ground ;  
 Then if far hence some chilling blast should make  
 The dark dust settle on thy countenance,  
 The Sháh's heart would consume for thee, the sun  
 Weep o'er thy face. Sow not throughout the world  
 The seed of enmity, for hastiness  
 Becometh not a prince. If thou dost swerve  
 From mine advice and trust to violence,  
 And to thy might, the counsel of Pírúz  
 Oft will recur to thee, and then the words  
 Of thine ill counsellors will seem but wind."

C. 1654

Núshzád made answer : " O wind-pated dotard !  
 Ask not my troops—exalted warriors—  
 Or me—the Sháh's son—to cry out for quarter.  
 The Faith of Núshírwán is naught to me ;  
 My heart inclineth to my mother—her  
 Whose constant practice is the Faith of Christ.  
 I will not quit her Grace and Faith. Although  
 Its Founder—Christ—was slain, the World-lord's  
 Grace  
 Hath not forsaken Him. That Holy One  
 Hath passed from this earth back to holy God,  
 Such was His aspiration when on earth.  
 I may be slain but shall not fear to die,  
 For to that bane there is no antidote."

He answered thus the old Pírúz and veiled  
 Air's face with shafts. The warriors of the host  
 Advanced, the battle-cry and clarion's blare  
 Went up, Núshzád, the chief, spurred on like fire,  
 Came as it were Ázargashasp, and brake  
 The left wing of the army of the Sháh,  
 Where none remained to fight with him. He slew

Full many a Lion of the host, wherat,  
 Grown wrathful, Rám Barzín bade shower arrows,  
 And fill the air as 'twere with hail in spring.  
 The din of battle went up on both sides  
 From all the valiant soldiers there engaged.  
 Núshzád was wounded in the mellaу. Oft  
 He called to mind the counsel of Pírúz,  
 And reached in pain the centre of the host,  
 Pierced by a shaft and pale with agony.  
 Thus said he to the warriors of Rúm :—  
 “ To fight one's sire is wretched, vile, accursed ! ”

Bewailing and lamenting thus he summoned  
 A bishop and confessed his heart's desires.  
 He said : “ The evil fortune caused by me  
 Hath fallen rigorously upon myself.  
 Now, since my head will pass beneath the dust,  
 Dispatch a horseman to my mother. Say  
 To her : ‘ Núshzád hath left this world. For him  
 The days of right and wrong are at an end.  
 I prithee be not grieved at heart for me ;  
 Such is the fashion of this Wayside Inn !  
 Since I have been allotted this dark day  
 How could my heart be glad and brighten earth ?  
 All living creatures are but born to die ;  
 Grieve not for me, for thou art mortal too.  
 'Tis not my slaying that confoundeth me,  
 But worse—my sire's displeasure. Let me have  
 No mausoleum, throne, or stately rites,  
 But bury me with Christian burial.  
 I need no camphor, musk, or spicery,  
 For arrow-stricken I depart the world.' ”

He spake and shut his lips. Thus passed Núshzád, C. 1655  
 That noble Lion-heart. Now when his troops  
 Heard of his death they fled the battlefield.  
 The Írániан leader, hearing that the prince  
 Was slain, went weeping to his couch in haste.

The troops ceased slaying on the field of fight,  
 And neither joyed nor spoiled. They saw the prince  
 Slain and o'erthrown with ignominy, his head  
 Upon a Rúman bishop's breast : the field  
 Was filled with wailing for him. Rám Barzín  
 Was troubled to the heart and asked the prelate :—  
 “ What know'st thou of the prince's dying wishes ? ”  
 “ Except his mother,” thus the bishop answered,  
 “ None must behold his head exposed. He, seeing  
 That he was wounded by a shaft, forbade  
 All obsequies and musk and spicery,  
 Or coronet, brocade of Rúm, and throne,  
 Perceiving his to be the slave's dark lot.  
 His mother now will shroud him and provide  
 A tomb and winding-sheet with Christian rites,  
 While his condition now is that of Christ's,  
 Although he did not die upon the Cross.”

Of all the Christians that were in the land  
 There was not one but had his visage torn.  
 A cry rose from the country. Men and women  
 Assembled. From the plain they raised the corpse  
 Of that young, gallant prince—the Heart and Eyes  
 Of Núshírwán, the Sháh—upon a bier,  
 Transporting it three leagues by hand, then set it  
 Upon two mules which bare it to his mother.  
 Now when she was aware of what had chanced  
 Her head and crown descended to the dust.  
 She came forth to the street unveiled. A crowd  
 Assembled round her in the market-place.  
 They set a camp-enclosure round about,  
 And all the folk cast dust upon their heads.  
 They laid him in the earth. He passed. He came  
 From wind and suddenly to wind returned.  
 Gund-i-Shápúr<sup>1</sup> was all in tears, consumed  
 With sorrow for the anguish of the Sháh.  
 Why writhe so madly in the bonds of greed ?

<sup>1</sup> See p. 219.

Thou know'st that here thou canst not long remain.  
 Seek to escape, give not the world such heed,  
     Smell not its rose so fondly, 'tis but bane.  
 From Faith and righteousness turn not thy head,  
     Or else the wrath of God will chasten thee ;  
 "A father's wrath," a pious Arab said,  
     "Will bring upon thy life calamity."  
 When sire shall be displeased with son in aught  
     Know that in seed and fruit that son is bad.  
 Oh ! never make thy father's soul distraught  
     Whatever trouble thou from him hast had.  
 When thou'rt secure refrain thy heart from woe,                   C. 1656  
     Nor on thy heart the fire of trouble fling,  
 Let not thy passions master wisdom so,  
     But act with seemliness in everything.<sup>1</sup>  
 Now be the world's king happy all his days,  
     And may he bear these words of mine in mind.  
 Mahmúd, the world-lord, who ensueth praise,  
     A niche therefor in every heart will find.  
 Love ever shineth from his Grace divine,  
     His crown's top is the pillar of the sky.  
 Now ask, if cup thou hast, for amber wine,  
     And hold not quaffing acting sinfully.  
 Seek joy and mirth but never be bemused,  
     Nor think that talk—wise talk—should be abused.

<sup>1</sup> Four couplets omitted.

## PART II

### THE STORY OF BÚZURJMIHR AND OF THE SEVEN BANQUETS OF NÚSHÍRWÁN

#### ARGUMENT

The Sháh, being disquieted by a dream, sends emissaries through the empire to find an interpreter. One is discovered at Marv in the person of Búzurjmihr, then a youth, who having been brought before the Sháh interprets the dream and is advanced to great honour. The Sháh subsequently gives a series of entertainments at which discussions on wisdom and morals are substituted for the usual diversions of Oriental banquets, and Búzurjmihr again greatly distinguishes himself.

#### NOTE

Persia, like other nations, has its Wisdom-literature. This comprises apogees, apothegms, proverbs, parables, the interpretation of dreams and dark sentences, astrological forecasts, the solution of problems, the supplying the correct answer to questions relating to religion, morals, conduct, and expediency, and longer discourses thereon, reflections on fate and fortune, on the uncertainty of all terrestrial affairs, on the vanity of striving after wealth and fame, and the importance of leaving behind one a good name after death. All these forms of wisdom find expression in the Sháhnáma, and the poet himself has been not backward in contributing his quota. At the first available opportunity in his work he utters his "Praise of Wisdom"—the first created of God and His best gift to man.<sup>1</sup> A collection of all the passages dealing with such themes and subjects as are mentioned above, and including Firdausi's own reflections on such matters, as have occurred in the poem up to this point, would amount to something considerable, but scattered through a mass of narrative they are apt to be overlooked. In this reign, however, we are confronted by formal collections of primitive Persian Wisdom associated for the most part with the name of Búzurjmihr but to some extent with other great officials and with

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 101. Cf. too p. 103, *supra*.

Núshírwán himself. Firdausí availed himself of the opportunity of the conjunction of the just Sháh with the wise counsellor to bring together all that he could find in his authorities and elsewhere on some of the subjects mentioned at the beginning of this note. That a large Pahlaví literature once existed on such matters, and arranged sometimes in the form of question and answer, we know from what is extant. Thus the sage in the “Díná-i Maínág-i Khirad” (“Opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom”) consults the Spirit of Wisdom on sixty-two points and receives answers, e.g. “The sage asked the spirit of wisdom thus: ‘Which man is the mightier?’ . . . The spirit of wisdom answered thus: ‘That man is the mightier who is able to struggle with his own fiends; and, in particular, he who keeps these five fiends far from his person, which are such as greediness, wrath, lust, disgrace, and discontent.’”<sup>1</sup> The concluding question is: “Which is that good work which is greater and better than all good works, and no trouble whatever is necessary for its performance?” The answer is: “To be grateful in the world, and to wish happiness for every one. This is greater and better than every good work, and no commotion whatever is necessary for its performance.”<sup>2</sup> These questions and answers are quite of a piece with the sages’ gnomes in the poem. There are also extant in Pahlaví the “Pandnámak-i Vadshórg-Mitró-i Búkhtakán” or “Bakhtagán,” i.e. the “Book of Counsels of Búzurjmíhr the son of Bakhtagán,” the “Characteristics of a Happy Man,” and other texts dealing with similar subjects.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt but that Firdausí derived the sententious, gnomic, parenetic, or whatever one chooses to call them, portions of the Sháhnáma, like the narrative, indirectly from the Pahlaví. Four series of such passages occur in the present reign. The first and longest is in the present Part. The second is Búzurjmíhr’s Discourse on good deeds and works in Part III. The third is Núshírwán’s answers to the questions addressed to him by the archmages. The fourth is the *vivd voce* examination that Hurmuzd, Núshírwán’s son, has to pass at the hands of Búzurjmíhr, by order of the Sháh, before being nominated as his father’s successor. One cannot help feeling a sneaking sympathy, reprehensible though it be, with him when we find him signalising his advent to the throne by making a clean sweep of his father’s ministers from whose “wise saws and modern instances” doubtlessly he had suffered much in the days of his youth. Nero acted similarly in the case of Burrus and the younger Seneca. Of these four series the third is concerned only partly with Wisdom-literature, some

<sup>1</sup> WPT, iii. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Id. 113.

<sup>3</sup> GIP, ii. 113 *seq.*

of the questions dealing with Núshírwán's own conduct on specified occasions. This and the fourth series will appear in Volume VIII.

Búzurjmihr, the son of Bakhtagán, of Marv, the man chiefly associated with the Wisdom-literature of the Sháhnáma, is but a semi-historical figure hardly mentioned by any historian before Firdausí's time with the exception of Mas'údí who died when the poet was a youth. Mas'údí gives twelve maxims of Búzurjmihr's and little else,<sup>1</sup> so that practically we are dependent on what Firdausí tells us, and this, with regard to the incidents recorded, generally has something of the præternatural about it. Búzurjmihr's career begins with a dream, and while sleeping on his journey to the court a snake, which seems an Arab rather than a Persian touch, comes and breathes over him. Moreover, his fall from power is preceded by an omen and his restoration to favour accomplished by another. We never hear of him as being associated with any of Núshírwán's great achievements in administration or in war. He is employed, it is true, upon two missions, once to expound a game—chess—and to propound another of his own invention—nard—and once to negotiate in time of war a loan for his master, which falls through owing to the fact that Núshírwán has a higher conception of the dignity of the office of the scribe than Búzurjmihr himself. His repute seems largely due to Firdausí, who used him as a peg whereon to hang all the old clothes of the Wisdom-literature that the poet was too conscientious to discard but could not dispose of elsewhere. There is, however, a thanksgiving couplet to testify that he was not sorry when the worst of his task was over.<sup>2</sup> If the number seven were not such a favourite in Persian story one might suggest that the Seven Banquets of Núshírwán originated in a perverted reminiscence of the seven Greek philosophers who were entertained for a while at his court when Justinian closed the schools of Athens,<sup>3</sup> and that Búzurjmihr himself is not much more than a native composite reproduction of those hapless and disillusioned sages.

Mohl has some apposite remarks on the Wisdom-literature:

“ Ce qui a le plus contribué à la gloire du règne de Nouschirwan, c'est la réputation de son vizir, Buzurdjmehr, qui est en Orient le représentant de toute la sagesse humaine, comme Nouschirwan lui-même est la représentation de la justice. On les a entourés tous les deux d'une auréole de fables, et l'on a mis sous leurs noms tous les contes qui se rattachent par leur nature à la renommée particulière de chacun. On a donc attribué à Buzurdjmehr tous

<sup>1</sup> MM, ii. 206 seq., vii. 164.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> GDF, v. 93.

les traits de sagesse et toutes les moralités qu'on a pu trouver, et Firdousi les rapporte au long les uns et les autres. Quant aux moralités, le poète avait évidemment découvert quelques collections où on les avait réunies, et il nous en donne à trois reprises différentes, ou des traductions complètes, ou d'amples extraits. Je crois que les originaux ont dû être composés en *pehlewi*, et que ces sentences ont éprouvé quelque dommage, soit de la part des copistes, soit de celle des traducteurs, car les questions et les réponses ne paraissent pas toujours s'accorder suffisamment. De plus, les copistes du *Livre des Rois* on évidemment été arrêtés par le texte et ont fait pour le redresser beaucoup d'effort malheureux. . . . Il est très-probable encore que les sentences que nous trouvons dans les moralistes arabes et persans sont des restes de cette antique sagesse des Perses. Les observations et les règles qu'elles contiennent nous paraissent en général bien simples et parfois bien pueriles ; mais cela même parle pour leur origine reculée. Elles ont été une fois neuves et frappantes et ont été transmises aux nouvelles générations, entourées du respect qu'inspire en toute chose la réputation d'antiquité. Ce n'est certainement pas dans une monarchie comme celle de la Perse sous Nouschirwan, que commençait à tomber de vétusté, qu'on avait besoin d'inventer des moralités élémentaires.”<sup>1</sup>

On the same subject Nöldeke says : “ In the discourses on wisdom and riddles which take up so much space in the story of the first Chosrau (Kisrâ) are probably to be found many duplicates of whole passages ; to settle these questions much material besides the Sháhnáma is available, but truly to investigate these wearying fragments would require an unusual amount of patience ! ”<sup>2</sup>

### § I

*How Núshírwán had a Dream and how Búzurjmihr interpreted it*

Now in the tale of Búzurjmihr will we  
 Reveal a cheerier visage. Do not deem  
 That there is naught but folly in a dream ;  
 Know that a dream may smack of prophecy,  
 And in especial when such visitings

<sup>1</sup> P., Vol. vi. Préface.

<sup>2</sup> NPS, II, p. 29.

Impress the clear mind of a king of kings.  
 The stars with sky and moon hold conference,  
     Their words are whispered and dispersed through  
     space,  
 And clear souls dreaming see the future thence  
     As fire is mirrored in the water's face.  
 One night Sháh Núshírwán, the wise and shrewd,  
 That lucid spirit, lay asleep and dreamed :  
 A royal tree grew up before the throne,  
 And joyed his heart. He called for harp and wine  
 And minstrelsy, but on his throne of peace  
 And joy there sat with him a sharp-toothed boar,  
 Sat ready-dight for revelry and claimed  
 To quaff the wine from Núshírwán's own cup.  
 Sol rose in Taurus and the skylark's note  
 Was heard on all sides yet the monarch sat  
 Upon his throne in dudgeon at that dream.  
 They called the interpreter of dreams and held  
 A session of the magnates at the court.  
 The Sháh narrated to those archimages,  
 The counsellors, his dream. The interpreter  
 C. 1657 Made no reply, he knew of no such case,  
 And one that pleadeth ignorance is excused.  
 The Sháh, thus left unanswered by the sages,  
 Was instant what to do in his concern,  
 And sent to every side an archimage,  
 One enterprising, shrewd of heart, and wise.  
 He made each take a purse and entertained  
 High hopes from their return. In every purse  
 There were ten thousand drachms that every envoy  
 Might seek out some interpreter of dreams,  
 Some man of understanding, some adept,  
 To solve the world-king's dream and to reveal  
 The mystery, and then bestow on such  
 A full purse and the royal compliments.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

So to all parts a veteran archmage went—  
 A prudent cavalier and man of lore.  
 One of these chiefs—Ázad Sarv<sup>1</sup>—came to Marv,  
 Went through the town and saw an archimage,  
 Who taught the Zandavasta to some youths  
 With harshness, anger, and raised voice. The tallest,  
 An earnest student of the Zandavasta,  
 One whom they used to title Búzurjmihr,  
 Was poring lovingly upon the roll.  
 Ázad Sarv turned his rein, drew near, and sought  
 An explanation of the great king's dream.  
 The scribe replied : “ ‘Tis not my business ;  
 The Zandavasta is my help to knowledge.  
 I teach these children but I do not dare  
 To breathe of aught beyond,” but Búzurjmihr  
 Said blushing to his master, having heard  
 The envoy's words : “ This quarry is for me ;  
 It is my business to interpret dreams.”

His teacher bawled : “ Hast thou thy roll by heart  
 That thou shouldst thus exalt thy neck in pride,  
 And set up as a dream-interpreter ? ”

The envoy said to him : “ O learnéd man !  
 He may possess this skill ; abash him not.  
 This youth's lot may be high through fortune's teaching,  
 Not thine.”

The master wroth with Búzurjmihr  
 Cried : “ Tell then what thou knowest,” but he  
 answered :—

“ I will speak not till set before the Sháh.”

The envoy gave him money and a steed  
 With all things needful. They set off from Marv,  
 As pheasants pace 'neath roses, and discoursed  
 About the Sháh, his power, Grace, crown, and state      C. 1658  
 Till at the hour for provand and repose  
 They reached a spot with water, lighted down

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. v. p. 260.

Beneath a tree and, having eaten, rested.  
 While Búzurjmíhr slept in the shade, his mantle  
 Drawn o'er his face, his noble way-mate saw,  
 Being still awake, a snake which drew away  
 The mantle from the sleeper, vehemently  
 Breathed over him from head to foot, then clomb  
 The tree. When that black snake had scaled the stem  
 The youth awoke, and when the serpent saw  
 The youth's discomfiture it disappeared  
 Amid the dusky boughs. The envoy stood  
 Astound, invoking oft the name of God,  
 And thought : " This wise youth will attain to great-  
 ness ! "

They left that wood, pushed on, and reached the  
 Sháh.

The envoy hurried first before the throne  
 Of Núshírwán, and said : " Oh ! may thy fortune  
 Be ever young, O Sháh ! From court I went  
 To Marv and roamed about as pheasant doth  
 Within a rosary. Amid the sages  
 I found a wise youth and have brought him hither  
 In haste."

He told withal what Búzurjmíhr  
 Had said and of the portent of the snake.  
 The world-lord called and told the dream to him.  
 He heard, grew full of matter, and replied :—  
 " There is a youth disguised in women's garb  
 Within thy bower. Now put all strangers forth,  
 That none may know our purpose, and command  
 Thy ladies all to pass before thy presence  
 With measured tread, and then I will demand  
 Of that bold reprobate how came he thus  
 Within the Lion's lair, for God will show  
 The secret fact to be as thou hast dreamed."

The Sháh put forth all strangers, closed the palace  
 Of king of kings, and bade the eunuchs bring,

As swift as smoke, the Idols dwelling there.  
 They came, those Idols of his bower, in all  
 Their perfumes, tints, and beauty. All these fair ones, C. 1659  
 Exhaling jasmine, dainty, modest, passed  
 With leisured tread before him, but no man  
 Appeared among them, and like angry lion  
 Raged Núshírwán. Then said the interpreter :—  
 “ This should not be ; there is a youth among them.  
 Bid them to pass a second time all bare,  
 And probe their practice to the uttermost.”

The Sháh spake thus : “ Cause them to pass again,  
 And put away the veil of modesty.”

They passed the second time and, when all thought  
 The dream an empty one, a youth appeared  
 Of cypress-stature and of kingly looks,  
 But quaking like a willow and despairing  
 Of his dear life. Now in the great king’s bower  
 Were seventy girls, all noble Cypresses,  
 And one of them, with cheeks of ivory,  
 Was daughter to the governor of Cháh.  
 The youth with jasmine-face and musk-perfumed  
 Had been her love at home. He followed her  
 Where’er she went and served her like a slave.  
 The Sháh inquired of her : “ Who is this man  
 So cherished by my slave, so favoured, young,  
 And daring, in the bower of Núshírwán ? ”

“ He is not,” said the girl, “ as old as I.  
 He is but young. One mother bare us both.  
 Our sire was different, our mother one.  
 There is naught wrong between us. He assumed  
 This kind of habit, for through modesty  
 He did not dare to look upon the Sháh.  
 Oh ! make it not a pretext that my brother  
 From shamefastness before thee veiled his face.”

The Sháh said to the youth : “ Thou worthless dog !  
 Both race and family are smirched by thee.”

He frowned. He was amazed at that young pair,  
Then bade in wrath the executioner :—  
“ Let the dust hide them.”

So he haled them back  
Behind the curtains of Sháh Núshírwán,  
And hung them there—a warning to the rest.  
The Sháh gave that interpreter of dreams  
Purse, steeds, and robes, and, wondering at his know-  
ledge,  
Observed his sayings. They inscribed his name  
Among the counsellors, the archimages.  
Thus prospered Búzurjmihr, and circling heaven  
Showed him its face, while ever day by day  
His fortune greateened, and the Sháh’s heart joyed  
In him exceedingly.

3. 1660

That heart was full  
Of right ; the Sháh was cultured, heart and brain.  
He had residing at his court archmages,  
And sages understanding in all knowledge.  
Three score and ten—all men of eloquence—  
Were lodged and entertained continually.  
He used, when not engaged with justice, largess,  
Festivity or war, to question them,  
And deck his heart with knowledge. Búzurjmihr,  
Though still a youth, was eloquent and shrewd  
And fair to look upon, surpassing all  
The famed archmages, readers of the stars,  
And sages, in his knowledge, and became  
Exalted over those philosophers.  
None was so learnéd in astrology.  
In leechcraft he excelled <sup>1</sup> and spake with ease  
Of conduct, government, and policies.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

## § 2

*The first Banquet of Núshírwán to the Sages, and the  
Counsels of Búzurjmihr*

The board was spread one day. The Sháh commanded :—

“ Bid the archmages come, the learned, the curious,  
The eloquent, the prudent, and observing.”

The archmages vigilant of heart, the chiefs  
That were accomplished in all knowledge, came,  
And, having feasted, called for wine and drank  
Until their spirits rose, not bringing wisdom  
To disrepute but to refresh their souls.

The prudent Sháh said to those men of lore :—  
“ Display the hidden knowledge that ye have ;  
Let every one possessed of understanding  
Within his heart hold forth and pleasure me.”

The wise men bold and mighty in discourse  
Set loose their tongues in presence of the king,  
Both young and old, as he required of them.  
When Búzurjmihr had listened to their words,  
And noted that the Sháh held knowledge dear,  
He rose, did reverence, and said : “ Just judge !  
Be earth the bondslave of thine ivory throne,  
Heaven lustrous with the Glory of thy crown.  
If now the Sháh shall bid his slave unlock  
His tongue then I will speak although unworthy,  
And, in respect of knowledge, least of all.  
No wise man can be blamed for having loosed  
His tongue in presence of Sháh Núshírwán.”

The monarch looked upon the sage and said :—  
“ What reason can there be for hiding knowledge ? ”

The youth forthwith displayed his mastery,  
And spread light round him while his eloquence  
And counsels fixed the archimages’ hearts.

He first displayed his gifts in praise of God,  
 And then proceeded : " One whose mind is clear  
 Will utter much in little ; hasty folk  
 Are talkative and tedious. When fools' talk  
 Endureth long the speaker is despised.  
 Seek worth and not addition, for the world  
 Is fleeting, and we are but sojourners.  
 Were our days to endure for evermore  
 The world would have too many candidates.  
 While here below humanity is best,  
 And knowledge in that view will not gainsay thee.  
 Our inward light we owe to righteousness,  
 And we must weep o'er darkness and chicane.  
 The heart of every one is slave to passion,  
 Which differeth with each, and in the world  
 Each hath his humour ; it is well that thou  
 Conform therewith. All foremost in affairs  
 Still will be scheming and endeavouring more,  
 But sages, scholars, and the inly blest  
 Dwell here below and set their hearts above.  
 Vex not thyself about the unattained ;  
 'Tis toil of body and distress of soul.  
 He that is strong will act straightforwardly,  
 But lies and double-dealing come of weakness.  
 If thou lack knowledge silence is the jewel,  
 While if thou art in love with thine own knowledge  
 Debate will take that wisdom out of thee.  
 Rich is the man that hath not greed, and blest  
 Is he that hath not covetise for mate.  
 Humanity is brother unto wisdom,  
 Which is as 'twere the crown upon the soul.  
 To have a sage for mortal enemy  
 Is better for thee than a fool for friend.  
 The man content is rich ; he putteth greed  
 And care in bonds. Thou wilt give ear to sages  
 If thou art humble in thy wish to learn.

When one is masterful in counselling  
 Men falter not in action. Let the man  
 That hath forgot his knowledge hold his tongue.  
 When thou hast wealth in hand with gold and silver,  
 And steeds caparisoned, in daily cost  
 Be neither close nor lavish. Choose the mean,  
 And let thine only guide be rectitude.  
 The wise man keepeth foes afar, and they  
 Become his servants. Know thou, he that doth  
 His best will win in war. Speak not vain words,  
 For from that fire ensueth naught but smoke.  
 Spend not thy thoughts upon what ne'er can be,  
 Because with water thou canst pierce not iron.  
 A king if he be learned is humble too  
 Though knowledge make him great and powerful.  
 He that acknowledgeth God's handiwork  
 Hath passed the ills of fortune ; he will serve  
 God more and more, cast out the Dív's suggestions,  
 Refrain himself from what should not be done,  
 Afflict not those that should be unafflicted,  
 And in the last resort incline to God,  
 Who is our Nourisher and Fosterer."

Now at that goodly speech of Búzurjmihr  
 The doctors all grew fresh of countenance,  
 Rose in the presence of the king of kings,  
 And proffered praise anew. The company  
 Were all astound at Búzurjmihr, that one  
 So young should rise so high. The world-lord mar-  
 velled

At him, then summoned the chief registrars,  
 And bade them set his name first on the roll :  
 His fortune shone forth like the sun in heaven.  
 Again the archmages entered on discourse,  
 While all the sages were in wonderment ;  
 The youth set loose his tongue, for he was pure  
 Of heart and of an ardent soul, and thus

C. 1662

He said : “ We must not even in our thoughts  
 Turn from the king, the righteous judge, for he  
 Is as the shepherd and we are the sheep ;  
 Again, we are the earth, he is high heaven.  
 We must not quit our fealty to him,  
 Must not renounce his way and ordinance,  
 But joy when he is glad, if we are fain  
 To proffer to him all the age’s due,  
 Diffuse his excellences in the world,  
 But keep his confidence inviolate.  
 Presume not thou upon his dignity,  
 For e’en the lion’s heart is frayed by fire.  
 We should call e’en a mountain that despised  
 His bidding foolish-hearted and light-witted.  
 All evil and all good come from the Sháh,  
 From him come bond and dungeon, crown and throne.  
 The world hath from his love its worth and Grace,  
 While at his wrath our livers seethe within us.  
 C. 1663      The crowned head is the Grace of God, the sage  
                   Hath joy and mirth therefrom. Of Áhri man  
                   Is he that joyeth not ; his heart and brain  
                   Are cultured not with knowledge.”

They gave ear

To what the young man said, and those outworn  
 Revived in soul. With tongues and mouths all praise  
 That mighty convocation went its ways.

### § 3

#### *The second Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmíhr and the Archimages*

A se’nnight passed. That king of ardent heart  
 Convoked the wise and shelved the world’s affairs  
 Because he wished to hear the words of sages—

Those that were worthy to be called to court,  
 And were approved by knowledge to the Sháh.  
 They came, the wise in utterance, both young  
 And elders of experience. With the doctors  
 Of ardent soul fared youthful Búzurjmihr,  
 The exalted one. These doctors sage and shrewd  
 Sat near the lofty throne and turned their looks  
 On Búzurjmihr because at him the face  
 Of Núshírwán grew bright. One of the wisest  
 Then questioned him concerning fate and fortune :—  
 “ What is their character and who ordained them ? ”

He answered : “ One aspireth, being young.  
 He toileth night and day, and yet his path  
 Is dark and narrow and his conduit low,  
 While some mere dolt will sleep on fortune’s throne,  
 And rose-trees scatter roses over him.  
 Such is the character of fate and fortune,  
 No toil avoideth their apportionment ;  
 The World-lord, the All-wise, our Fosterer,  
 Hath fashioned thus the star of destiny.”

Another said : “ What man attaineth greatness ?  
 To whom is high estate the most becoming ? ”

He said : “ The man that hath the better know-  
 ledge  
 Of what is good and putteth it in practice.”

Another said : “ What is there best in us ?  
 Who from the world is worthiest of good ? <sup>1</sup>

He answered : “ Gentleness, munificence,  
 With magnanimity and courteousness.  
 The humble man who boweth down his neck ;  
 His hand will give, expecting no return ;  
 He toileth and by toil would win the world,  
 And keepeth step with fellow way-farers.”

“ What is the special virtue of the sage,”  
 Another said, “ in moments of dispute ? ”

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

C. 1664

He answered : " To discern when he is wrong,  
And modify his methods and his views."

Another one inquired : " How should one act  
To make existence more durable ? "

He thus made answer : " Whensoe'er the heart  
Is fraught with wisdom there is gladness too.  
Then will the man both give and take aright,  
And shut the door of fraud and knavery,  
Will pardon faults whene'er he hath the power,  
And not be hasty or irascible."

Another asked of him : " Among the folk  
Who is best able to command himself ? "

He said : " The man that is not led by passion  
Away from nobleness and native worth,  
And likewise he that can command his weakness,  
Aware that evils follow on excess."

Another said : " Is there aught anywhere  
More excellent than bounty and good nature ?  
Who bringeth speedily his crop to fruit,  
And furnisheth two springtides in a year ? "

" One," thus he made reply, " that all unasked  
Doth deck his soul with generosity,  
But one that hath the praise of the receiver  
Regard him not as giving but as trading."

One said : " What are the adornments of a man,  
And which is noblest ? "

Búzurjmihr replied :—  
" He that is bounteous toward a worthy object ;  
He towereth like a cypress in a garden,  
And never withereth, but one unworthy,  
Though he be set in musk, will savour not ;  
No flower will grow upon that arid thorn.  
To question of the dumb or of the deaf,  
Though thou art justified, is profitless."

" Within this Wayside Inn," another said,  
" The sage is not exempt from pain and trouble.

How shall we act that we may win fair fame,  
And so begin that nobly we may end ? ”

He answered : “ Keep from sin ; treat all the world  
As though it were thyself ; what thou mislikest  
Inflict not on another—friend or foe.”

Another said : “ Which sayest thou of the twain  
Is better—labour moderate or great ? ”

He answered thus : “ From wisdom’s standpoint  
thought

Alone is worthy. If thou needest fruit  
Toil in proportion to the work in hand.”

“ If we must weep o’er those that are to blame,”  
Another asked, “ who can deserve our praise ? ”

He answered thus : “ Whoever hath the most  
Of hope and fear and awe of holy God.”

Another said : “ O thou illustrious  
In wisdom and whose head out-toppeth heaven !  
What is the goodliest destiny for me  
From this exalted and unstable sky ? ”

That man of eloquence made answer : “ His  
Who is secure and is exempt from need ;  
Him fortune treateth with benevolence  
So long as he is just in all his ways.”

C. 1665

“ What is the knowledge,” asked another one,  
“ Whereby I may be happy in the world ? ”

He answered thus : “ That of the patient man,  
Who holdeth in contempt the impudent,  
And his whose brain is not perturbed by wrath,  
And who, though wroth, will wink at others’ faults.”

Another asked : “ What man is he, O sage !  
That winneth the approval of the wise ? ”

Said Búzurjmihr : “ The man whom wisdom  
feedeth,  
Who mourneth not the lost but giveth up  
His darling to the dust without regret,  
Pain, or dismay, rejecteth empty hopes

Like willow's fruit, is always glad and gay,  
And careless of the processes of time."

Another said : " What are the faults of kings  
Whereby the hearts of righteous men are saddened ? "

He answered : " Wise men say that there are four :  
The first is terror of the foe in fight ;  
The second being niggardly in giving ;  
The third rejecting wise advice in war ;  
The fourth is hastiness of temperament,  
And sleeping not upon their purposes."

Another one inquired : " What man is faultless,  
And what is there to blame in noble men ? "

" We call one upright," thus said Búzurjmihr,  
" When wisdom beareth witness to his words,  
While those that seek by cunning and injustice  
To shine are blamed for falsehood and deceit.  
Between them is the man of violence,  
Abusive, with his head fulfilled with strife,  
And who, though meek and humble with the king,  
Yet madly persecuteth holy men."

Another said : " What kind of character  
Will profit him that seeketh not mishap ? "

" The speaker of the truth is true in all  
His deeds," he answered, " governeth his tongue,  
Is modest, and soft-voiced amidst of clamour.  
Best is the sage who holdeth it unmeet  
To banish wisdom for the sake of passion."

Another sage inquired : " Who is the man  
That can without mishap transact affairs,  
Tend his own life, and profit kith and kin ? "

He thus made answer : " He that from the first  
Hath known and sought the door of holy God—  
The Source of thy thanksgivings and thy Refuge,  
The Lord of day and night, of sun and moon.  
Moreover heartily he must obey  
The Sháh's behests in public and in private,

Tend his own person dearly and shut fast  
 Thereon the door of travail and of greed,  
 Must care for his own kindred, feed the poor,  
 And give his children teachers, for the world  
 Must not be trusted to the ignorant,  
 And when a son is docile to command  
 'Tis for the father to make much of him."

"What is the place an upright son should hold,"  
 Another asked him, "in his sire's esteem ?"

He thus made answer : "In his father's eyes  
 A glorious son is dear as life itself :  
 The father's name abideth after death  
 Because the son will say : 'My father taught me.'"

Another asked : "What dost thou see in riches  
 To grace the heart ?"

He made reply : "The man  
 Of wealth is honoured though the wealth is vile ;  
 But there is much that is bound up therewith,  
 Take heed that thou misprize not these my words,  
 For, first, whate'er thou hast a mind unto  
 Will by its nature show if thine be good ;  
 And, next, for thee to have and not employ  
 Is to treat stones and royal gems as one."

"Among the kings with fame and lofty crown,"  
 Another said, "whom callest thou the best ?"

"That king," he made reply, "with whom the good  
 Dwell safely while the bad quake at his voice :  
 The earth reposeth underneath his throne."

Another said : "What maketh a man rich,  
 And who in this world is distressed and poor ?"

He thus replied : "The man that is content  
 With what the Master of high heaven bestoweth,  
 While for the man whom fortune favoureth not  
 There is not any evil worse than greed."

The famous men were full of wonderment  
 At him and lauded him with one consent.

## § 4

*The third Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmíhr and the Archimages*

A se'nnight passed. The eighth day with the dawn  
The all-conquering Sháh sat on his throne and sum-  
moned

Before him all the men of understanding,  
The wise and eloquent, who all discoursed  
At large, but truly none much pleased the Sháh,  
Who after said to Búzurjmíhr : "Unveil  
Thy shamefast face."

That fluent sage set loose  
His tongue, displayed his varied lore, and first  
He blessed the Sháh, and said : "Be this crowned head  
Victorious," adding : "None becometh great  
Unless he shun the pathway of mishap.  
If thou wouldst rise to greatness by thy knowledge  
Thou needest wisdom in thy choice of words.  
In quest of fame one must be brave, the age  
Rejecteth faint-hearts. If thou seek'st the throne  
Accomplishments are needed since the bough  
That putteth forth its green must bear thee fruit.  
When folk make question of accomplishments  
'Tis vain to cite mere aptitude,<sup>1</sup> for that,  
With these to seek, is not approved and worthless.  
In dealing with this point a wise man said :—

' If roses savour not forbear to speak  
Of colour ; none in fire a stream will seek.'  
A king is all the richer for his bounty,  
And hath no credit for his secret treasures.  
If thou hast claimed attainments justify  
What thou hast fairly spoken by thy deeds.  
The sage is happy being fed by heaven

<sup>1</sup> Or "high lineage."

With wisdom, and the man of simple heart  
 Because 'tis free from all deceitfulness.  
 In this world wisdom is a trusty tree,  
 And the great king's heart is its first of fruits.  
 Thou wilt be easy if thou art content,  
 But practise greed and thou wilt quake therefor.  
 Do not thy kindness in the sight of men,  
 For thou wilt have small kindness in return.  
 Good fortune favoureteth the open-hearted,  
 And he is blest who beareth patiently.  
 Still if a man would rise he must be furnished  
 With certain things to aid him in the struggle.  
 First, rede and erudition ; secondly,  
 A ripe experience ; thirdly, friends to help  
 In time of action and to estimate  
 The chances every way for good and ill,  
 And to be profitable afterward  
 In every-day life and emergencies.  
 He needeth, fourthly, rectitude and wisdom  
 To purge his heart of falsehood and of fraud,  
 And, fifthly, if thou art possessed of strength  
 Toil with thy body ; greatness will result.<sup>1</sup>  
 The strong unless they labour ne'er will reach  
 The height of their desires, but over-toil,  
 Know, endeth in despair. I will set forth  
 The five characteristics of the sage,  
 Which to observe involve him not in trouble,  
 With seven too of the fool, and 'tis no marvel  
 If he be irked thereby : and, to begin,  
 No sage is vexed at loss or prematurely  
 Is glad, for disappointment will perturb him.  
 He counteth not upon the unattained  
 So as to break his heart if he should miss it.  
 He neither hopeth that which ne'er can be,  
 Nor saith : 'The willow-bough will bring forth fruit.'

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted.

When at his ease from travail and from ill  
 He recketh of the future, wherefore when  
 Time bringeth hardship on him he will prove  
 Beforehand and not slack in enterprise.

- C. 1668
- The fool's way, as I said, is sevenfold :  
 His wrath is kindled with the innocent,  
 His treasure opened to the unworthy man  
 Without return of meed or recompense,  
 While, thirdly, he is an ingrate to God,  
 And is not wise and cognizant of good,  
 But, fourthly, talketh loudly of himself  
 To every one and, fifthly, is involved  
 In pain and loss through his own feckless words ;  
 He trusteth, sixthly, to untrusty folk,  
 Expecting thorns to bear him painted silk,  
 And, lastly, utterereth lies in argument,  
 Endeavouring to shine by impudence.  
 Know this, O thou exalted sovereign !  
 That no man getteth aught but harm from ill.  
 When any one is mute in company  
 That silence is melodious to the heart.  
 By hearing some one wise and eloquent  
 Thou wilt get provand for thy body, counsel  
 And prudence for thy heart. Forget not thou  
 Such words because they crown the throne of knowledge.  
 If thou wouldest bring that knowledge into bearing  
 Release thy jewel from its case by speech,  
 And if thou wouldest extend thy fame draw forth  
 Thy tongue as 'twere a falchion from its sheath ;  
 But if thou holdest session with the unwise <sup>1</sup>  
 The under then will have the upper hand.  
 By knowledge are the soul and heart illumed ;  
 See thou go not about to compass lies.  
 When one of eloquence is holding forth  
 Abide his words, be not impatient ;

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Thou mayst get wisdom from his utterances,  
 And afterwards repeat what thou hast heard.  
 Use not thy wisdom as a means of gain  
 Though not to do so may result in hardship.  
 With heart and tongue in an accord of right  
 The door of loss is barred on every side.  
 Oh ! may the heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh,  
 Be open to instruction evermore."

An archimage of subtle intellect  
 Then asked : " What are the good and seemly things  
 That give a man a lustre in the world,  
 And quittance from the troubles of the time ? "

He answered thus : " Whoe'er attaineth wisdom  
 Will gain thereby the fruitage of both worlds."

" But if he hath not wisdom," said the archmage,  
 " Since wisdom is God's radiant robe of honour ? "

Said Búzurjmihr : " Then knowledge is the best,  
 The learned is mighty midst the men of might."

" But if," the archmage said, " he hath not sought  
 That stream and never bathed his soul therein ? "

Thus Búzurjmihr replied : " The warrior  
 Must count his body as a worthless thing,  
 And if he striveth in the day of battle,  
 And layeth foemen's heads upon the dust,  
 He will be cherished in the great king's heart,  
 For ever happy and in good command."

" But if one is not valiant," said the archmage, C. 1669  
 Nor seeketh after knowledge, law, and Faith ? "

Then Búzurjmihr replied : " 'Twere well that death  
 Should set the helm of darkness on his head."

Another asked : " How shall we act that all  
 Of us may eat the fruitage of the tree  
 Set by the sage within the garth of spring,  
 And walk moreover underneath its shade ? "

Said Búzurjmihr : " The man that barreth up  
 His tongue from evil vexeth not his soul,

And rendeth not in talk another's skin.  
He will be likewise friends with all the folk,  
All troubles will be smoothed away for him,  
And enemy and friend will be as one."

Another asked him, saying : " Are the men  
That shun the way of failure great or good ? "

Thus Búzurjmihr replied : " An evil deed  
Is like a tree that beareth evil fruit.  
Thus if a man speak gently with his tongue  
But little harshness will befall his ear,  
For know it is the tongue that troubleth men ;  
So if thou wouldest be easy weigh thy words.  
The man of few words and a loyal subject  
Hath only one fit post—before the throne.  
Moreover he escapeth ills not come,  
As bird or beast escapeth from the net,  
While furthermore he triumpheth o'er evil,  
Is self-controlled and wise exceedingly.  
He leaveth well alone and troubleth not  
The inoffensive, letteth no good 'scape him,  
And counteth not upon the days to come.  
He shunneth foe with more than quarry's speed,  
And cleaveth unto friend like shaft and feather.  
For any pleasure that will end in grief  
The man of wisdom hath but little yearning.  
Put ease and indolence afar from thee,  
Take pains and make a feast of toil ; without it  
Thou wilt win not addition in the world ;  
There is no treasure for the indolent.<sup>1</sup>  
May this world live in Núshírwán, be he  
Its world-lord ever and his fortune young."

They held discourse at large upon this theme :  
The hearts of those grown drowsy were awakened.  
The archimates, magnates, and shrewd sages  
Blessed Búzurjmihr and gave the Sháh great praise,  
Then went rejoicing on their several ways.

<sup>1</sup> The two following couplets are transposed.

## § 5

*The fourth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and  
the Archimages*

Two se'nnights passed away and then the Sháh  
 Relinquished public business for a day,  
 And bade the archimages and great men  
 Assemble at the palace with the sages.  
 He asked about the body and its birth,  
 About wrath, peace, the intellect, and justice,  
 About the sovereignty, the crown, and power,  
 And how good fortune doth begin and end.  
 He questioned those archimages and inquired  
 Concerning that which pleased him. When the others  
 Had spoken as their knowledge was, but failed  
 To gratify the Sháh, he next addressed  
 Himself to Búzurjmihr and said : “ Bring forth  
 The splendid jewel from its hiding-place.”

C. 1670

Then Búzurjmihr gave praises, saying thus :—  
 “ O Sháh most loving and serene of heart !  
 Know that in all the world no king like thee  
 For justice, understanding, crown, and throne,  
 For Grace and mien, for counsel and for fortune,  
 Hath set the diadem upon his head.  
 The king that exerciseth self-control  
 Will be at rest from vengeance and from war  
 Because to shun unwarrantable deeds  
 Is better than to get a sorry heart.  
 How goodly is the saying of the sage :—  
 ‘ Self-discipline is goodly in a king.’  
 In seasons of dispute he feareth God,  
 Inclineth not to vengeance and to prowess,  
 And maketh wisdom ruler of his passions  
 When he is choleric. A monarch’s thoughts  
 Should not displease the Master of the world

Through whom he doth discern 'twixt good and evil,

And seeketh Paradise as virtue's meed.

A tongue truth-speaking and a reverent heart

Will be his glory in the world for aye,

While every one that is his counsellor

Will be a man of weight among the people,

Be eloquent, serene of heart, and just,

And give to small and great alike their due

According to the measure of their states.

The man that is the servant of the Sháh

Should not be damnified on that account,

And while a monarch holdeth sages dear

His crown will be exalted ; but if he

Shall take the counsel of the ignorant

He will bring down his crown's head underfoot,

For knowledge frighteneth the fool away,

Who in his ignorance is combative.

The world-lord, whose informants are all wise,

Aware of what is going on at court,

And able thus to foil the malcontent,

Will be still glorious. None must sleep aggrieved

Lest ill befall the Sháh from that mishap,

Who should ban him deserving chastisement,

The misbegotten and the ill-disposed,

Lest such should trouble those that are offenceless.

All captives in the prisons of the Sháh,

The guilty and the innocent alike,

Should be enlarged by the decree of God,

Who thus directed in the Zandavasta.

If one be an ill-doer black and base

The face of earth should be relieved of him,

For while his evil day continueth

He will bring ruin on the homes of men.

The world-lord must rejoice in faith and right

So long as he is in the world as Sháh.

'Tis his to cleanse it from the wicked Dív  
 In public and in private by the sword.  
 The king that ruleth his troops well will be  
 Untroubled by the grieves of suppliants.  
 When thou art wary of thy foes in counsel  
 Thine evil-wishers will lose heart. Man all  
 The breaches of the realm ere war betide.  
 Whenas the Sháh is blamed for anything  
 Reproach too falleth on the crown and throne,  
 Through grief the wish is to be quit of him,  
 And to make wisdom testify thereto.  
 Let grow the love thou bearest to thy son,  
 Who is as 'twere the reflex of thy face  
 In water. Teach him wisdom and good sense,  
 And seek but to illuminate his soul.  
 Unlock for him the portal of thy treasures ;  
 He must have no cause to bewail himself,  
 And when he putteth forth his hand to wrong  
 There is no need to break the prince's heart.  
 Recall him to the way with gentleness,  
 And keep a hold upon him from the first.  
 If in his heart thou find hostility  
 It is an ill weed ; pluck it from his plot,  
 For if it bideth 'twill grow strong and fill  
 The garden of the sovereignty with tares ;  
 But when the atheling hath Grace and sense  
 He must not hear the words of evil speakers ;  
 Still when the hand can reach the miscreants  
 Haste not to bloodshed save at God's command.  
 Destruction cometh on the royal crown  
 Through rascal-ministers and wicked wives.  
 Give fools a hearing, but when they propose  
 An unjust action do not thou consent.  
 'Tis needful to fulfil all righteousness,  
 And clear thine own heart of perversity.  
 The sole adornment for the mighty Sháh

Is right, for 'tis the Dív that causeth wrong.  
 Now when the Sháh shall hearken to these words  
 He in his heart will witness unto wisdom,  
 The crown will call down blessings on the king,  
 The throne of empire be confirmed to him,  
 Both will rejoice in him, his foes despair  
 Of fortune ; while this restless sky revolveth  
 His good name will be his memorial.  
 Now may the accomplished soul of Núshírwán  
 Be young while day endureth."

C. 1672

At his words  
 The assembly was amazed, compared with them  
 The counsels of the wise seemed lustreless.  
 When Núshírwán had listened to this speech  
 His greatness greatened great although it was.  
 The counsels given filled his eyes with tears :  
 He filled the speaker's mouth with lustrous pearls.  
 Then from the palace with their lips all praise  
 The company departed on their ways.

## § 6

*The fifth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and  
 the Archimages*

Thus seven days passed away. Upon the eighth,  
 Whenas the world-illumining sun blazed forth,  
 Put off its robe of lapis-lazuli,  
 And decked the world with golden-hued brocade,  
 The king of kings sat with the archimages,  
 The veterans, and officers of state—  
 Ardshír, the high priest and the chief of nobles,  
 Shápúr and Yazdagird, the scribe, the men  
 Of science and the readers of the stars,  
 The wise, the enlightened, and the eloquent.  
 The youthful Búzurjmihr, the orator,

Came to the presence of Sháh Núshírwán,  
 And did obeisance to his sovereign,  
 Who joyed at him and thus addressed the sages :—  
 “ Who wotteth aught whereby the Faith of God  
 May be confirmed, the royal throne kept seathless ? ”

Thereat the high priest loosed his tongue amid  
 The chiefs and said : “ The justice of the Sháh  
 Will cause his Grace, his crown, and throne to shine,  
 And when it openeth his treasury-door  
 His high renown will last when he is dead.  
 Moreover he should purge his tongue of lies,  
 And seek not lustre in the world by guile.  
 Next he will be both just and merciful,  
 And make his throne the glory of the age.  
 Then too the head of the illustrious Sháh  
 Should be not wrathful with an erring liege,  
 And, fifthly, he will speak so that his fame  
 In this world never will grow obsolete ;  
 He will speak truth in all things small and great,  
 And never derogate in any thing.  
 He will esteem withal as his own fortune  
 The servant of his throne. If wise in words  
 His speech will be convincing, and his heart  
 Ne'er satiate of learning and consuming  
 His brains with thought. All men are set at large  
 By wisdom and have little cause to wail  
 At fortune. Wisdom nourisheth the souls  
 Of sages, wisdom pointeth out the way  
 To those that seek. Tear not thy heart, O Sháh !  
 From wisdom's path, for wisdom fostereth  
 Fame and a noble end. Base and a fool  
 Is he that ever said : ‘ I am the man,  
 Because there is no peer to me in knowledge.’ ”

Then Yazdagird, the scribe, spake thus and said :— C. 1673  
 “ O wise and wisdom-loving Sháh ! in Sháhs  
 It is a thing unseemly to shed blood,

Or suffer trifles to disturb the heart.  
 Moreover when the king is light of wit  
 He putteth hand to matters thoughtlessly,  
 While, further, he is hasty with the wise,  
 And all the more so through his ignorance.  
 When lust for vengeance hath possessed his heart  
 The Dív is the associate of his soul ;  
 So too a judge's words, if he be hasty,  
 Lead not to fair results. The warrior,  
 Moreover, that is fearful of his life  
 In battle-time, not of disgrace, and he  
 Whose heart, though he be rich, is mean and narrow,  
 Were better hidden underneath the ground.  
 Authority becometh not a beggar,  
 Since he himself becometh not high rank.  
 A guileful elder is a hateful thing,  
 And after death his soul will be in fire.  
 When any youth is slack in business  
 The heart of fortune will grow sick of him,  
 Disease will make him prematurely old,  
 And may his vigour and his spirit cease."

When Búzurjmihr had heard these goodly words,  
 And had adorned his brain with wisdom's lore,  
 He said : " O Sháh whose face is like the sun's !  
 May shining heaven be at thy dispose.  
 Know this : that men of wisdom will sustain  
 Their souls with knowledge since the hearts of stones  
 And mountains sorrow o'er the ignorant,  
 For none respecteth him. He knoweth not  
 End from beginning, fame from infamy.  
 The common folk, still more the wisdom-seekers,  
 Despise the doings of such men as these—  
 The lying judge unhonoured by the sage ;  
 The general who guardeth well his treasure,  
 And is abandoned by his toil-worn troops ;  
 The sage that feareth not to do amiss

If he can have enjoyment therewithal :  
 The leech that aileth ; how can he cure others ?  
 The mendicant that braggeth of his wealth  
 While that whereof he talketh is but naught ;  
 A Sháh who letteth not his people rest,  
 Or sleep at night, disquieting their hearts,  
 And yet when favouring breezes blow on thee  
 Assumeth all the merit for himself ;  
 A choleric sage who eyeth others' goods,  
 And lastly he that counselleth a fool,  
 Or giveth the indolent authority.  
 They that lack wisdom and acquire it not  
 Will have occasion to repent their words.  
 The heart of any man, my gracious lord !  
 That hath not wisdom wrestleth with desire  
 In such wise as a flame devoureth brimstone,  
 Or maketh provand of a bed of reeds.  
 Long live the heart of Núshírwán, may he  
 Have this world's chiefs his servitors to be.”

C. 1674

## § 7

*The sixth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and  
the Archimages*

The Sháh allowed another week to pass,  
 Then issued orders to prepare the court,  
 Came and assumed his seat upon the throne  
 Of gold, with armlets, crown, and golden girdle.  
 On one hand was the archmage that was vizír,  
 And on the other Yazdagird the scribe,  
 While round him were the other archimages,  
 The chiefs, and Búzurjmihr the eloquent,  
 To whom the Sháh : “ Why keep the jewels hidden—  
 Those words which are a profit to the soul,  
 And make the unprized man of high estate ?

The speaker's treasure is not finished,  
While 'tis a pleasure to the listener."

Thus spake the archimage to Búzurjmihr :—  
“ O thou more famous than the turning sky !  
Know'st thou the thing whose more will harm, whose  
less  
Will strengthen thee ? ”

He thus made answer, saying :—  
“ By eating less thou wilt be easier  
In body and withal feed up thy soul,  
But by too much well-doing wilt advance  
Thy rival.”

Then said Yazdagird, the scribe :—  
“ O man of eloquence and heedful mind !  
What are the heart's three <sup>1</sup> secret blemishes  
Which men retain although they need them not ? ”

He answered : “ In the first place thou must purge  
Thy heart of all censoriousness, for none  
In this world publicly or privily  
Is free from fault. A chieftain, jealous of thee,  
Will weep <sup>2</sup> on growing thine inferior,  
While, thirdly, he that is a slanderer—  
The man of double face—endeavoureth  
To raise dust e'en from water.” <sup>3</sup>

Then the archmage  
Inquired : “ O thou that art supreme in knowledge !  
None in this world is franchised from desire,  
Which may be hidden or exposed to all.  
Supposing ways to gratify it open,  
So that 'tis manifestly in one's power,  
In my case which way will advantage me,  
And which result in travail, pain, and loss ? ”

He answered thus and said : “ The ways are twain,  
And thou canst journey either at thy choice.

C. 1675 One is the way of rashness, full of ill,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> With envy.

<sup>3</sup> Three couplets omitted.

The other that of wisdom and well-doing,<sup>1</sup>  
 And therein wisdom is the guide for thee—  
 A fact that is beyond all questioning.  
 God's robe of honour is upon the sage ;  
 Observe what man is worthy of that gift.  
 No one will purchase one of giant strength  
 Devoid of wisdom. In defect thereof  
 It is not well to live, for God is witness  
 That wisdom is the very life of life.  
 The man that hath acquired a base of knowledge  
 Is fitted for the warfare and the struggle.  
 First, let thy knowledge make thee turn to God,  
 Who is and who will be for evermore.  
 By faith in Him thou hast thy heart's desire,  
 And hast attained the goal whereto thou spedest.  
 Another point of knowledge is that thou  
 Shouldst use discretion in the choice of food.  
 Strive after purity in food and raiment,  
 And thus uphold the ordinance of God.  
 When thou hast need to earn thy daily bread  
 Run not to misers for their help and treasure,  
 But let thy choice be of some business  
 Whose reputation will not sink repute.  
 Make to thyself a friend of some great man,  
 Who can assist thee when thou art in straits.  
 Be silent when thou art in company  
 If thou wouldst win the praise of every one,  
 But if thou speak'st speak that which hast learned,  
 And branded on thy liver. Weigh thy words,  
 Not the dínárs within thy treasury,  
 For to a wise man treasures are but vile.  
 When thou art speaking let thy tongue be shrewd,  
 Make it thy shaft and let thy bow be wisdom.  
 Be not imprudent when a fight is toward,  
 But guard thy body from the enemy,

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted.

C. 1676

And when he hath arrayed the host against thee  
 Be prudent and preserve thy self-control.  
 When thou beholdest thine antagonist  
 Thy face must pale not. Thou wilt be victorious  
 If thou art prompt, but slackness will undo thee.  
 Be wary as thou urgest on thy steed,  
 And watch the weapons of thine opposite.  
 If he is eager do not turn away,  
 And choose thee prudent fellow-combatants ;  
 But strive not and have sense to quit the fight  
 On finding that thou art no match for him.  
 Thus tender too thy body when thou eatest ;  
 Food should not harm thee ; eating much will do it,  
 While taking little will increase thy strength.  
 Make not thyself a carfax at thy meals,  
 But always leave off with an appetite.  
 Use wine but use it for refreshment only,  
 For drunkards hear no praise from any one.  
 If thou adore God thou wilt be commended,  
 The world will be a head and thou the eye.  
 Let all thy converse be of the Creator  
 With adoration for the base thereof.  
 Profoundly watch the occasion when to act,  
 And when to take repose by night and day.  
 Select the mean in every enterprise,  
 In making peace as well as waging war.  
 All wind and water blent with dust art thou ;  
 Forget not thou the way of holy God.  
 Think more about thy worship than thy meals ;  
 Be still a novice though the law is old ;  
 Incline to good ; acknowledge benefits ;  
 Attribute all to Him who made the world ;  
 Prefer not lust to wisdom and advice,  
 Or wisdom will regard thee not thenceforth ;  
 Go not about to compass wickedness,  
 But being wise adorn thyself with virtues.

He that is good in public and in private  
 Is most to be commended in the world.  
 Teach to thy son the business of the scribe  
 That he may be as life to thee and thine,  
 And as thou wouldest have thy toils bear fruit  
 Grudge not instructors to him, for this art  
 Will bring a youth before the throne and make  
 The undeserving fortune's favourite.  
 Of all professions 'tis the most esteemed,  
 Exalting even those of lowly birth.  
 A ready scribe who is a man of rede  
 Is bound to sit e'en in the royal presence,  
 And, if he be a man of diligence,  
 Will have uncounted treasure from the Sháh,  
 While if endowed with fluency and style  
 He will be studious to improve himself,  
 Use his endeavours to be more concise,  
 And put his matter more attractively.  
 The scribe hath need to be a man of wisdom,  
 Of much endurance and good memory,  
 A man of tact, accustomed to court-ways,  
 A holy man whose tongue is mute for evil,  
 A man of knowledge, patience, truthfulness,  
 A man right trusty, pious, and well-favoured.  
 If thus endowed he cometh to the Sháh  
 He cannot choose but sit before the throne."

Whenas the king had listened to these words  
 His heart grew fresh as roses in the spring,  
 And he addressed the high priest thus : " Go to,  
 Give Búzurjmihr advancement. Claim for him  
 A robe of honour fitted for his state,  
 And money : he hath made our hearts elate."

## § 8

*The seventh Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmíhr and  
the Archimages*

C. 1677

A se'nnight passed, the Sun lit up his crown,  
And came and sat upon the ivory throne,  
Together with the high priest, the grandees,  
The world-aspiring and shrewd-hearted sages,  
With Sáda and with Yazdagird, the scribe,  
And as their leader the astute Bahman.  
Then spake the Sháh to Búzurjmíhr and said :—  
“ Adorn our hearts and show to us the way.  
Speak truth about me as thou knowest it,  
And seek not this world's honours by deceit.  
How should men give obedience to my hest,  
Observe my counsels, and act loyally ?  
Speak at thine ease and speak without reserve :  
Dress not plain words with colour and with scent.”

Thus Búzurjmíhr, the shrewd, said to the Sháh :—  
“ O more exalted than the azure vault !  
The service of the monarch of the earth  
Is, saith the sage, the path-way of the Faith.  
The orders of the Sháh brook no delay,  
Because the Shah's heart never must be straitened,  
And every one that is his enemy  
Is in his soul the liege of Áhriman.  
The heart that loveth not the monarch's person  
Should forfeit brain and skin. Know that the Sháh  
Is the world's peace, and when thou dost aright  
He will advance thee. Both for good and ill  
The power is his, he taketh not revenge,  
And injureth none. Wish not his son to fill  
His room but hold his dear face as thy life.  
Want never findeth entrance to the soil  
Of states whose monarch is their well-beloved.

His Grace will fend thee from all ill, for why  
 His fortunes nurse all virtue. When a king  
 Hath God's Grace on his face the world's heart laugheth  
 For joy. As thou partakest of his favours  
 Strive ever to give ear to his commands.  
 If thou shalt grow disloyal, e'en in thought,  
 That moment fortune will abandon thee.  
 If he associate with thee be not proud,  
 And if he banish thee revile him not.  
 Mark that a subject toiling for his king  
 Will in the toil find treasure and renown.  
 He that shall praise the monarch is of God.  
 And he that is of God will praise the monarch.  
 The liege must neither weary of his work,  
 Nor yet be slack in fight, must keep concealed  
 The counsel of the Sháh and tell it not  
 To sun and moon. One that is slack to do  
 The Sháh's commands doth outrage to himself.  
 Accurséd are the blossoms of the tree  
 That scattereth naught but leaves o'er crown and  
 throne.  
 Calumniate not his lieges to the Sháh,  
 Or thou wilt diminish thine esteem with him :  
 Great liars get small lustre in kings' eyes.  
 Let no one utter in the royal presence  
 Words that are not conformable with wisdom ;  
 But, if the Sháh shall ask thee, speak, not losing  
 Thy credit with him by loquacity,  
 Because there is more knowledge in the world  
 Than ears can hear in public and in private.  
 He whom the monarch of the world misprizeth,  
 That soul will be in pain for evermore,  
 While he will be in high esteem on whom  
 The Sháh's lips smile. If he shall show thee favour  
 Hug not thyself, old servant though thou be,  
 For, though thy service may have lasted long,

Know that thou art not indispensable,  
 And if he favoureth another man  
 'Tis doubtless one as loyal as thyself.  
 If he shall be displeased with thee in aught  
 Make thine excuses ere thou drawest breath,  
 And if thou wottest naught of thine offence  
 Lay bare thy heart in presence of the Sháh,  
 While if thou hast a grievance in thy heart  
 Break it but show not unto him thy face,  
 Lest by God's Grace he should discern thy secret,  
 Discern thy heart perverse and clouded mind.  
 Thereafter thou wilt get no good of him,  
 Not hearken to his accents warm with love.  
 Account the Sháh's court as a sea where lieges  
 Are sailors, and accomplishments are vessels  
 With words for anchors and with wits for sails.  
 A wise man, who is voyaging o'er that sea,  
 Will make his sails robust because they are  
 A source of strength and shelter to himself.  
 The accomplished man, whose wisdom is to seek,  
 Should tread not on the portal of the Sháh.  
 Although the Sháh should be a mount of fire  
 Still would his servants find existence good,  
 For if such fire burn at the time of wrath  
 It will but shine the more when gratified.  
 The Sháh at whiles is milk and honey, whiles  
 A biting bane. His acts are like the sea ;  
 The moon is bright in heaven at his behest.  
 One getteth from the sea a pinch of sand,  
 Another hath the pearl within the shell.  
 Be all the world alive in Núshírwán,  
 And circling heaven aye subject to his will,  
 For he doth head the monarchs of the world,  
 And ornament the empire with all good."

To Búzurjmíhr's oration Núshírwán  
 Gave heed, heart-joyed to look on him. The king

Was wont to give his largess on this wise :  
If he said “ Good ! ” the largess was four purses,  
But whensoe'er he said : “ Good ! very good ! ”  
The gift amounted in that case to forty,  
And when the treasurer reckoned with the Sháh  
Each purse was taken at ten thousand drachms.<sup>1</sup>  
The king of kings had said : “ Good ! very good ! ”  
A speech equivalent to all that coin.  
The treasurer brought with visage sunny-clear  
The purses full of drachms to Búzurjmihr.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 215, note.

# PART III

## THE STORY OF MAHBÚD AND OTHER MATTERS

### ARGUMENT

The poet tells how Mahbúd, sometime chief minister of Núshírwán and a virtuous and blameless man, was done to death by the machinations of Zúráñ, the chamberlain, and of a Jewish sorcerer, how too late Núshírwán discovered the plot, put the chamberlain and the Jew to death, and made all the amends in his power. The poet then tells how the presents sent by the Khán of Chín to Núshírwán were plundered on the way by the Haitálians, of the wars that followed and how Núshírwán married the daughter of the Khán. Firdausí then discourses of the justice of Núshírwán, of the happiness and prosperity of the world under his administration, and of the tribute paid to him by Cæsar and other potentates. The Part ends with a discourse of Búzurjmihr's on good words and good deeds.

### NOTE

§§ 1 and 2. Sháh Kubád had left several sons, of whom Núshírwán was not the eldest, but he was the heir to the throne by his father's appointment, who appears also to have made some arrangement for his recognition as such with the Emperor Justin, or at all events to have suggested it. On Kubád's death his eldest son, Káús, claimed the throne, but the prime minister Mahbúd (Mebodes) was in a position to indicate what Kubád's wishes on the subject had been, and Núshírwán became Sháh. Another brother of his, however, Jam by name, was very popular but disqualified for the throne by a personal defect. In these circumstances a conspiracy was formed to overthrow Núshírwán and make Jam's son, Kubád, Sháh with Jam himself as regent, Kubád being still a child. The conspiracy, which had much influential support, was discovered, and a clean sweep—the usual course in such cases—made of the conspirators and all their male relations with the exception of Kubád, who ultimately escaped to Con-

stantinople and was well received by the Emperor Justinian. There is no account of the conspiracy in the Sháhnáma, but it has been mentioned here because the poisoning incident and the drastic vengeance that followed may have been transferred from it to the story of the fall of Mahbúd as given in the poem. The Western account of the fall of Mahbúd is entirely different.<sup>1</sup>

§ 1. Milk, which "turns" so easily, especially in a hot climate, would be regarded as more sensitive to evil influences than other foods. Cf. Burton's *Supplemental Nights*, vol iv. p. 243 and note.

§ 2. In view of Núshírwán's tardy repentance and his reparation to the kindred of Mahbúd it is interesting to find a Mebodes in high command in the Persian army in A.D. 578.<sup>2</sup>

§ 3. The account of the building of Súrsán is a doublet of that of Zíb-i-Khusrau.<sup>3</sup>

§§ 4-11. At this point the Turks come historically upon the scene under the leadership of their Khán, whom Tabarí calls Sinjibú. In A.D. 569 or 570 they threatened to invade Irán, and Núshírwán sent his son Hurmuzd against them. As Hurmuzd was the son of the daughter of the Khán it is evident that the alliance between Sinjibú and Núshírwán must have been entered into at a considerably earlier period. The object of the alliance was to crush the Haitálians, and this was done. Núshírwán occupied their territory up to the Oxus—the old traditional boundary of Irán—while the Khán annexed all to the north of that river, but, according to Persian accounts, withdrew on the approach of Hurmuzd. Firdausí does not mention Núshírwán's wars with the Haitálians, and represents them as being the aggressors. No doubt they would do their best to prevent friendly relations between their two formidable neighbours. Later on the Khán, as Tabarí tells us, hearing from the vanquished Haitálians that Irán had been tributary to them, wished to assert his claim to a similar payment and marched southwards, as mentioned above, with that object. He found, however, the frontier of Irán too well guarded and soon withdrew.<sup>4</sup>

§ 11. For the so-called tribute paid by Rúm to Irán see p. 187, and for the temple of Ázargashasp, p. 5.

§ 13. See p. 278. The formula of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds plays an important part in Zoroastrianism. One of the most beautiful passages in the Zandavasta, Yasht XXII,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See NT, p. 147, note; GDF, v. 183; RSM, p. 377 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> NT, p. 159 and notes.

<sup>5</sup> DZA, ii. 314 seq.

deals with the subject and may be paraphrased briefly and metrically thus :—

Once Zoroaster asked, so Text and Comment saith,  
 “ How fares the good man’s soul when he has tasted death ? ”  
 And this was Heaven’s reply : “ The soul still sits anigh  
 Its tenement of clay for thrice a day and night,  
 And chants the sacred hymns in uttermost delight.  
 It sings : ‘ Oh ! happy he, the man whoe’er he be,  
 To whom the Great God grants all that he longed to see ! ’  
 And after that third night, at breaking of the dawn,  
 Mid lovely plants and scents that good man’s soul is borne,  
 And from the South will come a perfume-laden air,  
 The sweetest breath e’er breathed ; and then white-armed and  
 fair,  
 Bright, beautiful, and young, a Maid will meet him there ;  
 Whereat the good man’s soul will question : ‘ Who art thou,  
 For never have I looked on loveliness till now ? ’  
 And she will make reply : ‘ Thy Conscience, youth ! am I.  
 Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds, have made me thus  
 to be,  
 And they were all thine own, and I grew thus through  
 thee.’ ”

### § I

*The Story of Mahbúd, the Wazír of Núshírwán, and how  
 Mahbúd and his Sons were slain by the Sorcery of Zúrán  
 and a Jew*

C. 1679 This matter ended, I proceed to tell  
 The story of Mahbúd, the minister.  
 Cease not from learning for a moment’s spell,  
 And let not knowledge cause thy heart to err.  
 When thou shalt say : “ My lust for wisdom I  
 Have satisfied and learned all needful lore,”  
 Fate playeth off some pretty trickery,  
 And putteth thee to discipline once more.  
 Now hearken to a rustic minstrel’s lay,

Ta'en from the legends of a time long sped ;<sup>1</sup>  
 I questioned him of ages past away,  
     And this is what of Núshírwán he said :—  
 He had an upright minister, a man  
     Of vigilance, who was his treasurer,  
     Whose heart was full of wisdom and whose rede  
     Was right, whose sole ambition was fair fame.  
 This man so well disposed was named Mahbúd :  
     His soul and heart were full of good discourse.  
 He had two sons like jocund spring who served  
     Continually before the king, for he,  
     What time he was about to mutter prayer,  
     Or use the archimages' sacred twigs,<sup>2</sup>  
     Ate only what Mahbúd himself provided,  
     And trusted those two sons. He used to have  
     His kitchen in Mahbúd's house and demeaned  
     Himself as guest, and that good, famed man's sons  
     Themselves brought in the great king's meal. The  
     nobles  
     Were wont to weep for envy of Mahbúd  
     At court. There was a magnate, one Zúrán,  
     Whose aspirations all were centred there.  
 He was an old man and Sháh's chamberlain,  
     Conspicuous at feasts and audiences ;  
     His visage ran with tears the whole year through  
     In envy of Mahbúd and his two sons.

C. 1680

'Twas his endeavour to incense the Sháh  
     Against the doings of that holy man,  
     Yet failed to find an opening for slander  
     To set the monarch's mind against Mahbúd ;  
     But how should he—that man of wisdom—know  
     That he possessed an enemy at court  
     Since never had he cause to pale one whit  
     For all the words and practice of that knave ?

<sup>1</sup> Seven couplets omitted.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. i. p. 80 s.v. *Báj* and *Barsam*.

A Jew, it happened, borrowed of Zúráñ  
 One day some money to employ in trade.  
 He came and went, his influence grew, and he  
 Became that gloomy soul's associate.  
 Thus, as familiar with the chamberlain,  
 He came to be at home about the court,  
 And there one day conversed in confidence  
 Of spells, of court, the monarch of the world,  
 Of magic, necromancy, and black arts,  
 Of crookéd practices and villainy.  
 Zúráñ, attending to the Jew's discourse,  
 And hearing of the secrets of his craft,  
 Told his own secret to the Jew, and said :—  
 “ Discourse not of it save with me alone.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou must perform a deed of sorcery,  
 And give the age its riddance of Mahbúd,  
 Because he hath attained to such high state  
 That he will dominate the age itself.  
 He careth not for any. Thou wouldest say,  
 To put it shortly : ‘ He is Núshírwán.’  
 Now he—the world-lord—will not take of food  
 Save only at the hands of this man's sons,  
 Who hath become so great through royal favour  
 That heaven kisseth evermore his skirt.”

The Jew replied : “ This cause need not increase  
 Thy grief. What time the Sháh and world-lord taketh  
 The sacred twigs mark well what meats are served,  
 And see if there be any milk therein.  
 Meet thou the serving-man and sniff the meats ;  
 ’Twill serve if I but see the milk from far.  
 Then thou shalt see Mahbúd and his two sons  
 No more alive. Though he be brass or stone  
 That eateth he will perish instantly.”

Zúráñ attended to these words. His heart  
 Was freshened as he gazed upon the Jew ;

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Whene'er he went to court the Jew went likewise ;  
 They had their secrets, joys, and feasts in common.  
 A season passed with matters in this stay :  
 The court was haunted by that evil teacher,  
 That court whereto each dawn Mahbúd's two sons  
 Were wont to turn their steps so joyfully.  
 Behind the curtains of their noble father  
 There was a pious dame and well advised,  
 Who, when Sháh Núshírwán desired some food,  
 Was wont to spread a golden tray for him,  
 And lay thereon three platters set with jewels ;      C. 1681  
 The whole was covered with a golden napkin,  
 And used to come before the exalted Sháh,  
 Served by the two sons of the good Mahbúd.  
 The food consisted of rose-water, milk,  
 And honey. Núshírwán would eat and sleep.  
 One day it happened that the two young men  
 Were going with the tray to Núshírwán ;  
 It was conveyed upon a servant's head  
 To whom 'twas usual to entrust the food.  
 Zúrán, the chamberlain, beheld the tray  
 When coming to the palace of the Sháh,  
 And with a smile addressed the two youths thus :—  
 “ Ye trusty lieges of Sháh Núshírwán !  
 Reveal for once the colour of these meats—  
 The Sháh's repast—because they savour well :  
 Withdraw the silken cover just this once.”

The young men readily displayed the food.  
 Zúrán, who kept his distance, gazed thereon,  
 And in like manner did the Jew, who came,  
 When he had marked the colour of the meats,  
 And said thus to the chamberlain : “ The tree  
 That thou hast planted cometh into fruit.”

The two young men, both wise and vigilant,  
 Then carried in the tray to Núshírwán,  
 While after them Zúrán came quick as dust,

And thus addressed the Sháh, that noble man :—  
 “ O Sháh, the just, the favoured by the stars !  
 Touch not these meats till they be tasted first.<sup>1</sup>  
 The cook hath mingled poison with the milk,  
 And may thine enemies partake thereof.”

Sháh Núshírwán, on hearing, turned his gaze  
 On those two youths whose mother was the cook—  
 A prudent dame affectioned of her kin.  
 They in their innocence and rectitude  
 Rolled up their sleeves. Howbeit when they ate  
 Some of that milk and honey thou hadst said :—  
 “ Both have been stricken by an arrow.” Both  
 Swooned on the spot and died there in the presence  
 Of Núshírwán ! The monarch of the world  
 Beheld, his cheeks like flower of fenugreek,  
 And gave commandment : “ Let them raise in dust  
 The mansion of Mahbúd, respecting none,  
 Upon that dust let them cut off his head,  
 And may he and his cook both cease to be.”

None in the palace of Mahbúd, and few  
 Among his kindred in the world, survived.  
 The Sháh gave all his goods, his women, children,  
 And hoarded wealth, to spoil. In that affair  
 Zúrán attained his wish, since Núshírwán  
 C. 1682 Was quit of that good man, and held the Jew  
 In high esteem who cloudward raised his head.  
 Heaven turned awhile with matters in this stay  
 While from the Sháh right hid its face away.

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted.

## § 2

*How the Sorcery of Zúrán and the Jew in the Matter of Mahbúd  
was discovered, and how both were slain by Command of  
Núshírwán*

The Sháh, the world-lord, purposed, as it chanced,  
To hunt the wolf and bade that many a steed,  
Used in the chase, should pass before his eyes,  
Scanned them, and saw the brand-mark of Mahbúd.  
His cheeks flamed at those Arab horses, love  
Still had a place within him, and he burned.  
He wept for pain and with heart sorely seared  
Recalled to mind Mahbúd, and thus he said :—  
“ How much the wicked Dív made to transgress  
That man of counsel and of high degree !  
With that devotion and that rectitude  
Why did his spirit seek the path of loss ? <sup>1</sup>  
The Master of the world alone can tell  
The hidden truth beneath the outward show.”

He thence departed to the hunting-ground,  
Seared at his heart and followed by his men.  
Upon the route he talked with all and cheered  
His heart with words. He took full many a minstrel,  
And with their fascinations docked the way.  
Now as the Sháh’s chief minister and scribes  
Were journeying with Zúrán in company  
Their converse ran on spells and magic arts,  
On witchcraft and pernicious Áhriaman.  
The king said to the archmages : “ Trouble not  
Your hearts concerning sorcery, but let  
Your talk be all of God and of the Faith ;  
Look not for marvels in black arts and magic.”  
Zúrán said : “ Live for ever, and may wisdom  
Feed on thy words. All that they say of witchcraft

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Is true, though this is known but to adepts.  
If food have milk therein they by a look  
Can from a distance turn it into bane."

On hearing this a bygone time recurred  
To Núshírwán. He thought upon Mahbúd,  
And those two sons of his, and deeply sighed.  
He looked upon Zúrán but held his peace,  
And quickly urged his prancing charger on.  
His mind was in a fume with thought because  
Zúrán had been the foeman of Mahbúd.

C. 1683 He said : " I know not what this miscreant  
Had done upon the day whereon I slew  
Mahbúd, and that great house was overthrown.  
Would that almighty God would make all plain,  
And give my heart and brain tranquillity,  
Because I spy this fellow's marks heron,  
And am fulfilled with sorrow for the past."

He journeyed on with sad and aching heart,  
With lowering visage and with tearful eyes,  
And, having reached the ending of the stage,  
Set up his camp-enclosure by a stream.  
Now when Zúrán had reached the tent they cleared  
The place of strangers and the converse ran  
Upon the means of witching milk and honey.  
" It is my favourite subject," said Zúrán.

The Sháh then questioned him about Mahbúd,  
And by what means his sons were done to death,  
And heard the quaver in Zúrán's reply.  
His crime became apparent. Núshírwán  
Addressed him, saying : " Tell to me the truth,  
Conceal it not and act not knavishly,  
For knavery but causeth evil deeds,  
And evil comrades will corrupt good hearts."

Zúrán told all the truth, revealed the secret,  
Threw all the blame upon the Jew, and made  
As though he were possessed by grief and anguish.

The great king, having listened, fettered him,  
 And sent to that enchanter of a Jew,  
 As swift as smoke, a rider with two steeds.  
 Whenas the Jew had reached the lofty court  
 The exalted monarch questioned him with mildness,  
 And said : “ Inform me how the matter went,  
 And lie not to me touching this affair.”

The Jew asked for protection from the world-lord  
 If he revealed the mystery of black art,  
 And then told what Zúrán had said with all  
 The matter of their secret conference.  
 The world-lord heard with wonder and convoked  
 The marchlords, potentates, and archimages,  
 And in their presence for the second time  
 Investigated every circumstance.  
 The evil-minded Jew told everything  
 Till naught was hidden from the chiefs. The Sháh  
 Then bade the deathsman rear two lofty gibbets,  
 From each whereof a twisted lasso hung,  
 Before the palace-portal in the presence  
 Of all the host. The executioner  
 Haled to the gibbets and suspended there  
 Zúrán on one, the Jew upon the other,  
 In savage wise. ’Neath showers of stones and arrows  
 They gave their heads up for bewitching milk.  
 Tread not the world for evil, for it will,  
 Past doubt, befall the practiser of ill.

The Sháh long sought for kindred of Mahbúd,  
 If so he might find one that had escaped,  
 And found one damsel of unsullied name,  
 And three men eminent and excellent.  
 To these he gave all that Zúrán possessed,  
 As well as all the fortune of the Jew.  
 His soul kept burning on Mahbúd’s account,  
 And in the night he wept till it was day,  
 Would pray to God for pardon and pour forth

His heart's blood on his bosom. He bestowed  
Much largess on the mendicants and made  
His tongue moreover prayerful unto God  
That He might pardon what was done amiss,  
And call him not tyrannic and unjust.

The worshipper of Gcd, the pure of heart,  
Will in no evil doings bear a part,  
For though ill actions are not hard to do,  
Yet in the end the heart is sure to rue.  
Although thy heart shall be a flinty stone,  
Yet in the end its secret will be known,  
And low soever as thy voice may be  
Time also will reveal the mystery,  
While, even if the world shall not regard,  
Good done in secret is its own reward.  
If thou art innocent and pure of rede  
A portion in both worlds will be thy meed.

### § 3

#### *In Praise of the Wisdom of Núshírwán, and how he built the City of Súrsán*

The matter of Zúrán and of the Jew  
Is done, to wisdom now thy praise is due.  
Just though thou art here is no tarrying ;  
Thy fame will be thy memory, O king !  
The unjust sovereign, when all is done,  
Will have but sepulchre and malison,  
But if in heart thou dealest righteously  
Know that the world hath gained new grace by thee ;  
So if, O chief ! thou wilt have praise in death  
Let wisdom be thy leaf that flourisheth.  
Thus, through my words, though Núshírwán is dead,  
His justice hath achieved fresh lustihead.

As soon as all the world acknowledged him  
 He used his greatness only to win praise,  
 Both great and small reposed in peace while wolf  
 And sheep were watered at one fount. The mighty  
 Did service to him and were fain to have  
 His name upon their diadems, the neck  
 Had respite from the clasp of habergeon,  
 The warriors loosed their coats of mail, the shoulder  
 Had ease from sparth and sword, and naught was heard  
 But sounds of mirth. None strove against the world-  
 lord,

The tribute and the taxes everywhere  
 Were paid. He took toil easily and loved  
 The gear of chase and riding-ground. He sat  
 Within his palace arabesqued with gold,  
 And uttered counsel even in his cups.  
 He built a city on the road to Rúm  
 About two leagues in length. Within were mansions,  
 And halls and gardens, on one hand a river  
 And, on the other, heights. He built himself  
 A palace in the city with a hall  
 Of audience arabesqued with gold ; the vaulting  
 Was all in gold and silver, with the gold  
 Inlaid with divers kinds of precious stones.  
 He built a cupola of ebony  
 And ivory with figures of the same  
 And teak. Artificers from Rúm and Hind,  
 Whoever was a master in his craft,  
 And had inherited his master's skill,<sup>1</sup>  
 With all the illustrious artists of Írán,  
 As well as from the province of Nímrúz,  
 He gathered in that city, for it was  
 At once a great seat and a place of trade.  
 The prisoners of war brought from Barbar,  
 From Rúm, and from the parts laid desolate,

C. 1685

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps "Or had been recommended by his master."

He furnished with a dwelling-house apiece,  
 And made the city one of aliens.  
 The Sháh, the glory of the provinces,  
 Made of that city an attractive spot,  
 And, when complete, encircled it with hamlets.  
 The Sháh provided tracts of arable ;  
 The soil was fruitful and the trees bore well.  
 He settled there the hostages from Lúch,  
 Gilán, and other ravaged provinces,  
 Assigning occupation to each man,  
 And gave to each a helper if alone.  
 He furnished artisans, field-labourers,  
 And men to measure and survey the land,  
 Along with traders and with devotees,  
 With men of station and with underlings.  
 He decked that city as 'twere Paradise ;  
 The eye marked no unseemly spot therein.  
 He called the city by the name Súrsán,  
 For world-lords take delight in festivals.<sup>1</sup>  
 His only aim in public and in private  
 Was justice and the improvement of the world.  
 Since from the kingship time bare him away,  
     And made his crown another's to possess,  
     'Twill grant not thee an ever-during stay,  
     So purge thy heart of deeds of wickedness.  
 Know that this world is but a tricky show ;  
 Man keepeth nothing be it high or low.

## § 4

*The Story of the War of the Khán with Ghátkar, the Prince of  
 the Haitálians, the defeat of Ghátkar, and how they set  
 Faghánish<sup>2</sup> upon the Throne*

C. 1686 Hear how the Khán and the Haitálians fought,  
 And since a fight is toward take thy mace.

<sup>1</sup> Súr, a feast.   <sup>2</sup> Faghání (Chaghání ?) in original. Cf. p. 333.

Thus said the rustic bard, that noble one ;  
 Keep thou in mind what thou shalt hear from him :—  
 Of all the chiefs possessed of Grace and justice,  
 Of men of war, of treasure, and high birth,  
 Omitting Nushírwán, there was not one  
 To match the Khán of Chín in all the world.  
 All people from that realm to the Jihún  
 Paid homage to him as their sovereign.  
 That chief with troops, with treasure, and with crown,  
 Was camped on the Gulgaryún upon  
 The further side of Chách. Reports had spread,  
 Among the great men and throughout the world,  
 Of Núshírwán, his manhood, knowledge, Grace,  
 His greatness and imperial usages.  
 Then was it that the Khán, that prudent man,  
 Desired to win the friendship of the king.  
 He sat awhile with his own counsellors,  
 And all the men of name were gathered there.  
 In his desire for amity he sought  
 The counsel of the nobles and the priests,  
 Got ready presents that exceeded count—  
 All keepsakes worthy of a king's acceptance—  
 Of Rúman chargers and brocade of Chín,  
 Of thrones and crowns and swords and signet-rings ;  
 He got him ready five-score camel-loads  
 Of sundry trinkets that the land produced,  
 And bade his treasurer provide as largess  
 A hundred thousand of dímárs of Chín.  
 He also brought and added to the present  
 Ten camel-loads of drachms out of his treasures.  
 He then chose out a man of eloquence  
 Among his chiefs—a wise and travelled man—  
 And called a scribe before him with command  
 To write a letter from the Khán of Chín  
 On silk, as was the custom of the country,  
 Profuse in courteous greetings to the Sháh.

The envoy's way lay through the Haitálians' land—  
 A route beset by shaft and battleax—  
 Before whose ruler stood a host whose lines  
 From Sughd extended down to the Jihún.  
 That people's ruler hight Ghátkar the brave—  
 The most distinguished of their warriors—  
 Who when he heard of what the Khán had done,  
 And of his presents to the Iránian king,  
 Called from the host his veterans, discoursed  
 To them at large about the case, and said :—  
 " Ill hath befallen us from the stars. If now  
 The monarch of Irán and Khán of Chín  
 Negotiate and thus become good friends,  
 That friendship will hold menace for ourselves,  
 And this our state be wasted on two sides.  
 We needs must make a foray and deprive  
 The envoy of his life."

C. 1687

He chose among

The troops a man of name, of rank, and prowess,  
 Such as befitted, gave up all that wealth,  
 The camels and the steeds caparisoned,  
 To plunder and cut off the envoy's head.  
 One horseman of those warriors of Chín  
 Escaped. Now when the tidings reached the Khán  
 His heart was filled with grief, his head with vengeance.  
 He marched an army from Káchár Báshí ;  
 No chief was left in Chín or in Khutan.  
 He let no scion of Afrásiyáb,  
 Or of Arjásp, partake of rest and sleep.  
 They all marched forth to the Gulzaryún  
 With full hearts and with heads set on revenge.  
 The captain of the army of the Khán  
 Of Chín was Funj, who made dust reek to heaven.  
 At Chách the fury of the horsemen flushed  
 The waters of Gulzaryún rose-red.  
 Ghátkar heard of the doings of the Khán,

And chose an army from the Haitálians,  
 An army that obscured the sun, and called  
 For treasure, money, troops, and arms from Balkh,  
 Shákán, Ámwí, the Zam, Khatlán, Tirmid,  
 And Wísagird ; he gathered troops from all sides ;  
 From mount and waste, from sands and places bare,  
 They seethed like ants and locusts. When the Khán  
 Had passed the mighty river with his host,  
 With drums and lusty elephants, he massed  
 His powers round Mái and Margh ; the sun became  
 As dusky as a falcon's plumes.<sup>1</sup> Bukhárá  
 Was all fulfilled with mace and ax, for there  
 The ruler of the Haitálians was encamped.  
 Ghátkár had come forth with a mighty host,  
 And gathered all the native chiefs. The troops  
 Advanced from every quarter to the war,  
 And left the wind no way. What with the flashing  
 Of chieftains' swords and play of massive maces,  
 Thou wouldst have said : " Now iron hath a tongue,  
 And air a mace for its interpreter ! "

A wind arose, rose too the army's dust,  
 And light departed from the sun and moon.  
 Men of Kashán and Sughd were gathered there.  
 Tears filled the eyes of all—men, women, children—  
 As to the issue of that battlefield,

C. 1688

And whom the circling sun and moon would favour.  
 For one whole week those battle-loving hosts  
 Were opposites. On all sides lay the slain .  
 In heaps, and dust and stones were cercis-like  
 With blood. So thick were spear, mace, sparth, and  
 sword

That thou hadst said : " The clouds are raining  
 stones ! "

The sun evanished in the reek ; dust filled  
 The eyes of eagles as they flew. It veered,

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted.

Upon the eighth day, 'gainst Ghátkar, the world  
 Was all bedarkened like night azure-dim,  
 The Haitálians were o'erthrown, irreparably  
 For years, the wounded scattered everywhere,  
 And all the march was full of slain and captives.  
 The living from their hearts invoked God's name,  
 And said to one another : " Ne'er have we  
 Seen such a stubborn fight. Good sooth ! yon host  
 Is not of men ; 'tis ill to look on them ;  
 They have the faces of wild beasts and dívs,  
 And heed not right and wrong. Thou wouldest have  
 said :—

'They know not what it is to flee away  
 From scimitar and spear, from mace and sword.'  
 They all have dragon-faces and could pierce  
 A mountain with their spears, they all have claws  
 Like pards and hearts insatiate of war  
 And strife, ne'er take the saddle off their steeds,  
 And think a battle naught. Their chargers batten  
 On thorns, their riders sleep not but are watchful ;  
 They pass the nights in foray and attack,  
 And hazarding their persons in the flames.  
 They know not food or sleep. Would that the Dív  
 Would challenge them to fight ! We cannot strive  
 Against the Khán, and we must seek Írán.  
 If now Ghátkar will carry out our wishes  
 He will submit to Núshírwán, surrender  
 The Haitálians' land to him, and think no more  
 Of mace and sparth ; but if not we will choose  
 Some bold chief of the race of Khúshnawáz,  
 Some man acceptable to Núshírwán,  
 One that can make our state renew its youth,  
 To tell the Khán's proceedings to the Sháh.  
 The whole world praiseth Núshírwán, for he  
 Hath Grace, high bearing, destiny, and wisdom,  
 And wisdom is the cherisher of right.

He hath made Cæsar tributary. None  
Can strive with Núshírwán.”

## The Haitálians—

Men, women, children—were at one herein.

There was a high-born warrior of Chaghán,

C. 1689

Aspiring, youthful, fortunate, and just—

A man of wisdom, Faghánish by name,

Possessing troops and treasures of his own :

The chiefs and warriors<sup>1</sup> called him to the throne.

## § 5

*How Núshírwán had Tidings of the Battle of the Khán with  
the Haitálians and how he led a Host against the Khán*

Thereafter to the great king tidings came  
About the Khán, who was a valiant chief,  
The Haitálians and the warriors of that folk,  
And how he had o'erthrown them in the fight ;  
Moreover of the monarch of Chaghán,  
Just seated by new fortune on the throne,  
How he had taken that imperial seat,  
And, while the brave and glorious warriors  
Stood, one and all, before his throne, was ever  
Engaged in consultation with his magnates.

The monarch of the world sat full of care  
At these his wary emissaries' words,  
Then in his palace had a hall prepared  
For session, and the warrior-lieges came  
With the high priest Ardshír, with Yazdagird,  
The scribe, and with Shápúr. These counsellors,  
And sages, all held session at the throne  
Of Núshírwán, who said : “ Ye archimages  
Experienced and ye ministers of state !  
I have uncomfortable news—accounts

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

At once unpleasant and injurious—  
 About the Haitálians and what the Khán  
 Of Chín and marchlords of Túrán have done.  
 Troops gathered past all count from Chách, from Chín,  
 Khutan and Turkistán. They bore their helms  
 And vengeful scimitars for one whole week,  
 And never once unsaddled. In the end  
 The Haitálians were discomfited and most  
 Were slain or wounded. With renown like theirs—  
 A folk whose world is mace and partisan—  
 'Tis wonderful that they were worsted thus :  
 Defend me from a foolish general !  
 Had but Ghátkar had prudence and good sense  
 The sky itself had routed not his host.  
 The Haitálians, since their land is thus distraught,  
 Have sought a man descended from Bahrám Gúr,  
 Have placed him on the throne as their new king,  
 And done obeisance to him, one and all.  
 The Khán is posted on this side of Chách  
 In all his pride with treasure, host, and crown ;  
 He is descended from Afrásiyáb  
 And from Arjásp, and dreameth of Irán.  
 His triumph o'er the army of Ghátkar  
 Exalteth him in head above the sun.  
 It is not well for us that we should be  
 At one in such a story with the Khán.  
 Kashán, the land wherefrom this folk of Chín  
 Derive their strength, pertaineth to our realm.  
 Our subjects are oppressed by them and yield  
 To them their persons, boundaries, and treasure ;  
 What are your views herein, and how shall we  
 Deal with the Turkmans and the Khán of Chín ? ”

The prudent magnates rose and made reply,  
 First praised the Sháh, and said : “ O fortunate  
 And prescient Sháh ! all the Haitálian march  
 Is very Áhriaman, the folk thereof

Are double-faced and hostile to our coast.  
 They merit any ill that they may get,  
 Although the Sháh is right to speak them fairly.  
 Had we no grievance, nothing to avenge  
 In their case save the blood of Sháh Pírúz,  
 That noble man whom suddenly they slew,  
 And such a king—the lustre of the world !  
 May they joy not one day, for right from wrong  
 Resulteth never. Such is God's requital :  
 Ill cometh on the heads of all ill-doers.  
 Now if the Sháh referreth to the Khán  
 As one vindictive with an ancient grudge,  
 It may be that he hath ill counsellors—  
 Some tearful scions of Afrásiyáb.  
 Success too may have heartened him : no marvel  
 If thou dost fear him. As for the Haitálians,  
 And for Ghátkar's host, neither think nor trouble  
 Concerning them, but let thy shrewd mind turn  
 To what the kindred of Afrásiyáb  
 And of Arjásp, and what the Khán, who now  
 Is established on our bank, are doing. Thou art  
 The world's exalted king, both soul and wisdom  
 Derive their light from thee, and he is blest  
 Whom wisdom nourisheth. Thou art more wise  
 Than this great concourse and thou hast no need  
 Of sage or counsellor. The crown and throne  
 Become thee best of all the world, for thou  
 Hast Grace divine and might, thou fortunate !  
 Still if the Sháh shall go to Khurásán  
 He will have cause to tremble for his realm.  
 Hosts ever and anon will come from Rúm,  
 On seeing that our land is left unkinged,  
 Exact revenge upon the Írániāns,  
 And leave not to Írán or field or fell.  
 None yet hath set his foot upon our land,  
 Or meditated evil on this realm,

Yet if the Sháh show fight the crocodiles  
Will stir not in the streams for fear of him."

C. 1691

On hearing what they said of peace and war  
That master of the world agnized full well  
The feeling that those sages had at heart—  
That none of them had any wish for war,  
Preferring rather feasts and pleasuring—  
And answered : " God be praised, whom I revere  
In both worlds, that Írán through quiet, sleep,  
And feasting, hath forgotten how to fight !  
Preferring peaceful times and banquet-hall  
Ye have become indifferent to war ;  
Yet ease should follow toil, the body's travail  
Hath treasure for its fruit ; so in God's strength  
Will we at this month's end prepare to march.  
I will lead forth a host to Khurásán,  
Will summon troops from all the provinces—  
The men of name and warriors—and bind  
The drums upon the lusty elephants.  
I will not leave Haitálían or Khán  
To call down blessings on Íránián soil,  
But I will weed the world of all the wicked,  
And by my largess and mine equity  
Regenerate the realm."

The nobles marvelled,  
Applauded him, excused themselves, and said :—  
" Triumphant Sháh, endowed with Grace and justice !  
Oh ! may this age rejoice in thy commands.  
We chiefs are all thy thralls and bow our heads  
To thy behest and counsel. When the king  
Shall bid us fight he will not find us wanting."

So when the Sháh sat with his counsellors  
The conclave held debate a while thereon.  
Thus was it till the new moon rose and sat  
On its new throne. They saw the moon withal  
Upon the Sháh's own face, and acclamations

Rose from his court. Whenas the shining Lamp  
 O'ertopped the mountains, and the earth resembled  
 A golden saddle-cover, thou hadst said :—  
 “ They have set a topaz cup upon a robe  
 Of lapis-lazuli.” A shout and blare  
 Of trump arose. They bound the kettledrums  
 Upon the elephants, the soldiers trooped  
 To camp, and with them went the tymbal-players.  
 Then Yazdagird, the scribe, came to the court  
 With counselling archmages and Ardshír.  
 They wrote a letter unto every province,  
 To every man of name and every chief :—  
 “ The Sháh hath marched forth with the host to war,  
 So out of loyalty forgo your feastings.”

The Sháh bade send a letter to the Khán,  
 He offered greetings too to Faghánísh,  
 And marched an army forth from Madá'in  
 That covered all the world except the sea ;  
 Earth was all troops from mountain unto mountain,     C. 1692  
 And at their centre was the world-lord's flag.  
 The monarch led forth to Gurgán a host  
 That hid the sun. He rested for a space  
 O'er mount and meadow to pursue the chase.

## § 6

*How the Khán had Tidings of the Coming of the Host of  
 Núshírwán to Gurgán and wrote a Letter in the Cause of  
 Peace*

The Sháh took counsel with his troops what while  
 The Khán abode at Sughd, which everywhere  
 Was like a sea with kinsmen of Arjásp  
 And of Afrásiyáb. The Khán said : “ Earth  
 Will not support this host and throne of mine.  
 I will lead hence the army to Frán,

And onward to the cities of the brave,  
 Will bear the very dust away to Chín,  
 And set the heaven warring with the earth.  
 I will allow not any to possess  
 Crown, throne, or kingship, dignity or fortune."

Such was the language that he held awhile,  
 Ambitioning the world with troops and fame,  
 Until the tidings came about the Sháh,  
 How he had marched forth from Irán in state,  
 Of his victorious fortune and his might,  
 And how his army stretched from sea to sea.  
 The Khán was troubled when he heard the news  
 That stayed his purposed inroad, and he sat  
 In anxious conclave with his counsellors.  
 The great men of the army were assembled,  
 And he addressed his minister : " We cannot  
 Afford to blink these tidings. Núshírwán,  
 I hear, hath reached Gurgán and spread the realm  
 With troops. Good sooth, he hath not news of us,  
 Or hath a witless head. Mine army stretcheth  
 From Chín to the Jihún, the world is 'neath  
 The glory of my crown. I needs must go  
 And face him in the fight. Delay will shroud  
 The lustre of my name. Himself he deemeth  
 The limit and that none is king but he.  
 Now shall he learn of mine own warriorship,  
 For I will face him with the cavaliers  
 Of Chín."

A wise man thus addressed the Khán :—  
 " O monarch of the earth ! think not to fight  
 Against the Sháh, and give not to the winds  
 Thy realm and host. None of the kings, unless  
 His heart and counsel lour, ambitioneth  
 The Sháh's seat, for none hath his Grace and fortune :  
 The moon in heaven hath not such a mien.  
 He claimeth tribute both from Hind and Rúm,

Wherever there is wealth or peopled land.  
He is the lord of crown, the ornament  
Of throne, the conquering master of the world,  
And fortunate."

The Khán took fitting order,  
On hearing this, and asked his shrewd adviser :—  
“ What aspect hath this matter to the wise ?  
Two points confront us which we may not shun,  
And cannot readily pass o'er in silence :  
If war with him is toil and nothing more  
There is no better course than spending treasure.  
Dínárs can not be used to purchase raiment,  
Or food or carpetings when war is toward,  
But can procure peace, provand, fair attire,  
And carpetings. Let all afraid of ill  
Spurn drachms and be at ease.”

Then from the host  
He chose ten fluent speakers apt for parle ;  
A learnéd man of Chín too wrote a letter,  
All compliments, decked like his idol-houses,  
And to the king's court those ten prudent horsemen  
Set forth with much to say. Now when men brought  
The news to Núshírwán he decked the palace  
Of king of kings, then bade to raise the curtain,  
And introduce the envoys joyfully.  
The ten went in before the king, and took  
With them the letter, offerings, and gifts.  
The world-lord, when he saw, received them well,  
Inquired about the Khán and made them sit.  
They bent their heads before him to the ground,  
And gave the message of the Khán of Chín.  
There was a letter written in that tongue  
On silk, and this the envoy laid before  
The scribe. When Yazdagird began to read it  
The company were filled with wonderment  
Thereat. It first of all invoked the blessing

Of God, the All-just, upon the king of earth,  
 Next manifested forth the eminence,  
 Wealth, army, arms, and greatness of the Khán,  
 And thirdly said : “ Faghfúr of Chín himself  
 Acclaimeth me, unasked bestowed upon me  
 His daughter, and his host is mine to bid.  
 ’Tis for the presents that I sent the Sháh,  
 Which the Haitálians stopped upon the way,  
 That I came forth from Cháh to take revenge,  
 To take the crown and treasure from Ghátkar,  
 So came from the Gulgaryún that all  
 The waters of Jihún grew red with blood,  
 For when in Chín news reached us of the Sháh,  
 I praised the teller of his victories,  
 C. 1694 His manliness, his wisdom, modesty,  
 And learning, and in secrecy desired  
 All friendship with the monarch of the world.”

Now when the Sháh discovered from the letter  
 The power, the might, and purpose of the Khán,  
 They made a lodging ready for the envoys,  
 Praised and made much of them. Whene’er the board  
 Was spread for feast and revelry the king  
 Invited them, and for a month they shared  
 With him the hall, the banquet, and the chase.  
 One day he held his court upon the plain,  
 The air was darkened with the horsemen’s dust,  
 And all the marchlords with their golden girdles,  
 Men of Balúch and Gil with golden bucklers,  
 Attended in a body at that court,  
 Attended to do service to the Sháh,  
 And brought three hundred steeds caparisoned  
 With gold, and scimitars with golden scabbards.  
 Swords, double-headed darts, and javelins glittered :  
 Thou wouldst have said : “ Gold is compact with iron.”  
 Upon one elephant, whose back was all  
 Housed in brocade, they set a turquoise throne,

Nile-blue, and bruit and stir filled earth and air,  
Enough to deafen even the best of ears.  
The ambassadors from Barda', Hind, and Rúm,  
From every sovereign and peopled realm,  
And from the spear-armed horsemen of the desert,  
Went in a body to the king who thus  
Proved to the men of Chín : " Mine is the sway,  
Mine from the sun down to the Fish's back." <sup>1</sup>  
Air was all stir and dust of horsemen, earth  
All armature of war. They made mock-battle  
Upon the plain whereon there sallied forth  
The warlike cavaliers and wheeled awhile  
In pride with sparth and arrow, mace and bow.  
The plain was full of spear and javelin-men,  
And here were foot, there horse. The envoys, sent  
From every clime by every chief and ruler,  
Astonied at his host and equipage,  
His countenance, his glory, and address,  
Held talk with one another, saying thus  
In whispers : " This is an exalted Sháh !  
He seeketh honour, sheweth horsemanship,  
Displayeth to the warriors of the host  
His spear-point, and the skill that he hath shown us  
We ought to lay to heart that on returning,  
Each to our king, we may remember it,  
And say : ' None, young or old, hath seen one like  
Sháh Núshírwán.' "

They told to the world's king

The sayings of the ambassadors in private.  
He bade his treasurer bring upon the field  
His battle-gear, had body-armour brought,  
With helm and mail, and bade undo the buckles.<sup>2</sup>  
No lusty warrior, though broad of breast,  
Could lift the breastplate even from its place !

C. 1695

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> " les boutons (qui joignaient le casque à la cuirasse) " (Mohl).

The Sháh alone had chest and neck to bear  
 The body-armour, mace, and morion.  
 There was no archer in the host like him,  
 And no such warrior among the nobles.  
 Like some fierce elephant he sought the field  
 With ox-head mace in hand and under him  
 A fiery steed ; his stature 'mazed the throng.  
 A shout rose and the blast of clarions,  
 While bells resounded from the elephants' backs,  
 And drummers with their cymbals led the way ;  
 Earth was in travail 'neath the horses' hoofs.  
 The king of kings, helmed on an armoured steed,  
 Wheeled to the left and right. The ambassadors  
 Applauded him and louted to the ground.  
 The world-lord sought his palace from the plain,  
 And all the chieftains followed in his train.

## § 7

*How Núshírwán answered the Letter of the Khán*

The Sháh then bade a scribe come with Ardshír,  
 The high priest, and the scribe drew up on paper  
 A royal letter in the olden tongue.  
 He bathed his pen's two cheeks with ambergris,  
 And first gave praises to the Judge of all—  
 The Maker of the sky, height, depth, and love :—  
 “ We all are thralls, He is the King of kings,  
 And wisdom beareth witness to His might.  
 No breath can pass, no emmet tread the ground,  
 Unless by His command. Him have I prayed  
 To further, if He will, my benison  
 Upon the Khán. Now, first, for what thou saidest  
 About the Haitálians : ‘ They have girt up,  
 As I have told to thee, their loins for ill ;  
 They have shed blood unjustly, wantonly,

And have been taken in their proper toils : '  
 The evil-doer, though of lion's strength,  
 Must not be bold with God. Though these men bare  
 Themselves like leopards thou hast conquered them.  
 Again, for what thou said'st about thy treasure,  
 Host, puissance of Faghfúr, his throne and crown :  
 The sage is not at one with him that speaketh  
 Of his own greatness. Never hast thou seen  
 The crown and throne of greatness, and the host  
 And march of Cháh to thee are wonderful.  
 All greatness is a question of degree :  
 What star is higher than all other stars ?  
 Such is the language to be held with one  
 That seeth not treasure, army, march, or travail.  
 The mighty of the world have seen or heard,  
 If they have seen not, me, that I account not  
 The sea of Chín as water, and that mountains  
 Flee from my wrath. Earth is my treasury,  
 My care extendeth over sea and land.  
 Now, in the third place, thou wouldest be my friend,  
 And hast at heart to make with me a league.  
 Since thou art fain to feast I will not fight,  
 For no one e'er preferreth fight to feast,  
 And furthermore a wise man never seeketh  
 To fight against a man of high renown,  
 Still less with one compact of war, no laggard  
 Upon the day of battle, used to strife,  
 In battle-time requiring no instructor,  
 And one that in the fiercest of the mellay  
 Is as heart-calm as when enthroned and crowned.  
 May He that made the world be thine ally,  
 Thy crown and signet still continue bright."

They sealed this with the Sháh's seal, gave new  
 lustre  
 To royal crown and throne, prepared a robe  
 Of honour, as the royal usage is,

C. 1696

And bade the envoys come before the Sháh,  
 Who gave them verbal messages withal  
 In further explication of the letter.  
 The envoys well content then left the palace,  
 Set forth with acclamations on their way,  
 And came with tongues all praise before the Khán.  
 That world-experienced one put all folk forth ;  
 His minister attended at his throne.  
 The Khán called in the envoys and inquired  
 At large of them concerning Núshírwán,  
 First of his sense, his knowledge, and his counsel,  
 His mien, his conversation, and his stature ;  
 And secondly : “ How many troops hath he,  
 And who of them hath crown and signet-ring ? ”  
 Inquired about his rule, if just or not,  
 About his realm, his treasure, host, and crown.  
 The spokesman of the envoys loosed his tongue,  
 And answered touching all that he had seen.  
 He told the Khán : “ Account not Núshírwán,  
 O king ! as one inferior to thyself.  
 A hundred ages see but few like him  
 For leadership, for statesmanship, and favour.  
 At home, at feast, at war, and at the chase  
 We never looked on such a sovereign.  
 In height he is a cypress-tree, in strength  
 An elephant ; his hand is like the Nile  
 For bounty ; throned he is a trusty sky,  
 In battle-tide a baleful crocodile.  
 When he is wroth he roareth like a cloud ;  
 The mighty lion qualeth at his voice,  
 But gentle is it when he revelleth,  
 And his warm utterances ravish hearts.  
 In state and throne he is the blest Surúsh ;  
 He is a royal and fruit-bearing Tree.  
 The whole folk of Irán compose his host,  
 And are the adorers of his diadem.

What time he holdeth court upon the plain  
 The world itself containeth not his troops.  
 His mace-men all have golden belts and all  
 His ministers decore and Grace divine.  
 As for the steps up to his ivory seat,  
 His elephants, thrones, armlets, torques and crowns,  
 No one in all the world can estimate  
 His state except the almighty Judge of all.  
 Although his foeman were an iron mount  
 'Twould be a needle's eye before his wrath.  
 Let him that is aweary of his life  
 Wax fierce and counter Núshírwán in strife ! ”

## § 8

*How the Khán bethought himself and wrote offering his  
 Daughter in Marriage to Núshírwán*

On hearing this the Khán turned wan and like  
 The flower of fenugreek, his heart grew full  
 Of terror at the words, his brain was rent  
 By his solicitude. He sat in dudgeon  
 With his advisers, and he thus addressed  
 That noble company : “ Ye men of wisdom !  
 What is our rede herein ? Who can be more  
 Concerned and hurt than I by this mischance ?  
 He must not conquer in the fight or all  
 Our fame will turn to infamy.”

The sages  
 Took cognisance of all the affair and spake,  
 Suggesting divers lines of policy.  
 Then said the Khán : “ Our policy is this—  
 To send a pledge of good faith to the Sháh,  
 To take a deeper view and to arrange  
 That he shall be affined to me. I have  
 Full many a daughter in my ladies' bower—  
 All crowns upon the heads of noble dames—

And I will wed one to the king of kings,  
 And thus cut short my cares in that regard.  
 If we make blood-relationship with him  
 None will advise him to our detriment.  
 On his side it will be a joy and honour,  
 While war with any other is a jest.”<sup>1</sup>

The chiefs approved the counsel of the king,  
 And cried : “ That is the course.”

C. 1698

He chose three me  
 Of rank out of the host, men that could speak,  
 And grasp an answer. He unlocked his hoards  
 Of coin and said : “ Why should we treasure jewels  
 Save to win fame, shun shame, or occupy  
 In largess, feasting, and expedient ? ”

He had a gift made ready such as none,  
 Or great or small, e'er had beheld, and calling  
 A well experienced scribe declared his mind.  
 He first of all gave praises to the Maker,  
 All-wise, all-powerful, and all-sustaining,  
 The Lord of Saturn and of Sun and Moon,  
 The Lord of victory and mastery,  
 Who asketh from his slaves but righteousness,  
 And brooketh not that justice should be balked :—  
 “ His blessing be upon the Íránian king,  
 The Lord of scimitar, of mace, and helm,  
 The Lord of understanding, crown, and throne,  
 And dowered by the God of victory  
 With fortune and content. The king of kings,  
 Of royal race, wise, weighty, learned, and just,  
 Is ware that men, albeit great and noble,  
 Fain would be dear in other men’s regard.  
 Now when my sage ambassadors, the men  
 That are both mine associates and allies,  
 Had come back from thy court to mine and told me  
 At large about the Sháh—his justice, wisdom,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Good fortune, crown, pre-eminence, and throne—  
 His Grace divine caused to arise in me  
 A great desire to shadow 'neath his wings.  
 Now naught is dearer than our own heart's blood,  
 And prudent children and our hearts are one ;  
 So let him, if he will, demand of me  
 One of my stainless daughters—her that is  
 Most gentle, fair, discreet—and she in sooth  
 Shall profit him, the marches of Irán  
 And Chín shall meet, our worship be the more.”

This was all written out on silk of Chín,  
 And carried with the seal to the wazír.  
 The Khán selected from among his kin  
 Three men of noble rank and eloquence,  
 And they departed from the exalted court  
 Frán-ward to the exalted Sháh who, when  
 He heard thereof, prepared his crown and sat  
 Upon his royal throne of ivory.  
 So those three men of prudence and high rank  
 Arrived before the exalted throne. They brought  
 Three turbans, of dínárs some thirty thousand,  
 And laid them as a gift before the Sháh.  
 The gifts of gold and silver, the brocade  
 Of Chín, made earth more brilliant than the sky.  
 Now when the envoys duly had been seated  
 They called down blessings in their native tongue,  
 And then the Sháh's chief minister prepared  
 Fit lodging for them. Heaven revolved one night,  
 And when the bright sun rose above the mountains  
 The Sháh sat down upon the turquoise throne,  
 And set a crown of jewels on his head.  
 He ordered that the archmages and the chiefs  
 Should sit in conclave with the famous sages,  
 And said thus : “ Bring and lay before the scribe  
 The letter writ on silk.”

C. 1699

The nobles all

Sat round while Yazdagird drew near the Sháh,  
 And read the letter which amazed the throng,  
 Such good will, fair excuse, and compliment  
 Were patent in the utterance of the Khán.  
 All those illustrious and prudent chiefs  
 Began to praise the king : “ Thanks be to God,  
 With whom our refuge is, that He hath set  
 Upon the state a Sháh endowed with Grace,  
 With victory, and majesty, a Sháh  
 Good, kind, and prudent, one that is in fight  
 A mighty, raging elephant, in feast  
 A gallant host. All foes are underlings  
 Of thine, if they be worthy of that title.  
 We all were fearful of this power from Chách,  
 And of the Khán, who hath both crown and treasure,  
 By the imperial Grace is now our friend,  
 And seeketh with the Sháh affinity.  
 One that is wise among the warrior-chiefs  
 Will tender peace and justice. Since the Khán  
 Is ware that he can not withstand the Sáhh  
 He seeketh for affinity to him.  
 There should be no delay in this affair,  
 For such affinity disgraceth none.  
 His troops extend from Chín up to Bukhárá,  
 And all the chiefs are under his protection.”

Now when the Sháh heard what those sages said—  
 Those magnates and archmages shrewd of heart—  
 They cleared the hall of strangers and then brought  
 The ambassadors in haste before the Sháh.  
 The king of kings received them graciously,  
 And set them near the throne. Those chosen men  
 Of Chách beheld the chief in all his pomp  
 Of troops, wealth, crown, and gave their master’s  
 message,  
 Protesting that their words were true. The Sháh,  
 When he had heard the fervent words thus uttered

In gentle accents by the chiefs of Chín,  
 Replied : “ The Khán is great, wise, worshipful,  
 Desireth kinship with us through his child,  
 And illustrateth thus his own good will.  
 The man whom understanding maketh wise  
 Will look upon affairs with wisdom’s eye ;  
 We will take order, will advise us well,  
 And make response to all that he hath said  
 On this condition—that the Khán of Chín  
 Shall give our heart the liberty of choice.  
 I will dispatch a wise man who shall look  
 On all his women-folk and shall select  
 The most illustrious and dear to him,  
 See what her own maternal grandsire was,  
 And her own quality of royal birth.  
 When what we name shall have been done the Khán  
 Will have performed his portion of the pact.”

The envoys called down praises, saying thus :—  
 “ The Khán of Chín rejoiceth in the Sháh,  
 And were his ladies’ bower a cloud of jewels  
 He would withhold it not from Núshírwán.  
 Select among the sages one to go  
 Before the Khán whose ladies shall not fail  
 In that one’s sight their faces to unveil.”

## § 9

*How Núshírwán answered the Letter, and sent Mihrán  
 Siád to see and fetch the Daughter, of the Khán*

The king of kings heard what they said ; the age,  
 Outworn, revived for him. He called a scribe,  
 Spake of the Khán at large, and bade indite  
 An answer couched in choice and gracious terms.

C. 1700

He first gave praises to almighty God,  
 “The World-lord, Conqueror, and Nourisher.  
 The world is ’stablished by His ordinance ;  
 He is our Guide to good. He giveth worth  
 To whom He will and from abasement raiseth  
 Such to high heaven, the while another man  
 Is left in luckless case because unfavoured  
 By Him to Whom I own that thanks are due  
 For every blessing, and of Whom my heart  
 Is fearful when I do amiss. I would  
 That life should cease within my heart if I  
 E’er should desist from hope and fear in Him.  
 The worshipful ambassador hath come,  
 And brought a gracious message from the Khán.  
 Heard have I what was said about a league,  
 And of the virtuous daughters of his house :  
 My heart would joy to be allied to him,  
 And in especial through his own chaste child.  
 Lo ! I have sent to thee a prudent man,  
 A man whose mind esteemeth wisdom dear.  
 On coming he will tell thee all my views  
 As touching this alliance first and last.

C. 1701

Mayst thou for ever have a reverent mind,  
 Be happy-hearted and our warm friend still.”

The writer, when the pen was out of work,  
 Embellished all the paper, rolled it up,  
 And, when the last tears of the pen were dry,  
 Affixed a seal of musk. The Sháh bestowed  
 A robe of honour on the ambassadors,  
 Such as amazed the company, and chose  
 A wise old chief, by name Míhrán Sitád,  
 And five score famed Íránian cavaliers,  
 All men renowned, discreet, and eloquent,  
 And said thus to Míhrán Sitád : “ Go forth  
 Glad and triumphant, and with love and justice.  
 Be thine the fluent tongue of chiefs, be wisdom

Thy guide, thy heart all lovingkindliness.  
 Scan well the women's quarters of the Khán,  
 And throughly search out all their good and ill.  
 They must not fool thee with a mere display  
 Of countenance, of grace, and ornament.  
 The Khán hath many daughters stately, tall,  
 And crowned, behind his curtains, and of these  
 The offspring of his slaves are not for me,  
 Although they have a king to father them ;  
 Look thou for one that is both meek and good,  
 Whose mother is descended from the Kháns.  
 If she hath gifts according to her birth  
 She will rejoice the world and live in joy.”

Mihrán Sitád, when he had heard, invoked  
 Much blessing on the crown and throne, and left  
 The portal of the world-illumining Sháh  
 At a propitious season on the day  
 Khurdád. News of his coming reached the Khán,  
 Who sent out troops to welcome him, and when  
 He reached the presence of the Khán he kissed  
 The ground and proffered praise. On seeing him  
 That world-aspiring king received him well,  
 Assigning him an honourable room,  
 But, being much concerned at the affair,  
 Withdrew to the apartments of the queen,  
 Declared to her the words of Núshírwán,  
 Spake of his treasures and his host, and “ This  
 Sháh Núshírwán,” he told her, “ is still young,  
 And wary, and his fortune is young also.  
 Fain am I to bestow on him a daughter  
 To magnify our worship in his sight.  
 One such I have, concealed behind the veil—  
 A Crown upon the head of lady-hood,  
 The fairest of the fair throughout the world,  
 And many a chief hath sought her at my hands.  
 I love her so that never would I cease

To gaze upon her face. I have four others—  
 The offspring of my slaves, themselves both slaves  
 And handmaids, clever girls—and one of them  
 Will I bestow on him, and rest from warfare,  
 And from dispute.”

C. 1702

The queen replied to him :—

“ None in the world will oust thee, thou’rt so wise ! ”

In such discourse they passed the night away  
 Until the sun ascended o’er the mountains,  
 And then Mihrán Sitád arrived, drew near  
 The throne, and gave the letter. When the Khán  
 Had read he smiled upon the union  
 And goodly choice proposed, gave up the key  
 That oped his ladies’ bower, and said : “ Go look  
 On what is hidden there.”

Four trusty slaves  
 Came to accompany Mihrán Sitád,  
 Who, when he heard the Khán, went with the key  
 And them withal. He oped the doors. They entered,  
 The slaves protesting to him : “ Never star  
 And sun and moon have seen the sight that thou  
 Art on thy way to see ! ”

The ladies’ bower  
 Was Paradise adorned—all Suns and Moons  
 And goodly havings—while upon the throne  
 Five fay-faced maidens sat crowned and arrayed  
 In treasures, save the daughter of the queen,  
 Who wore no crown or bracelet, torque or jewel,  
 But only had on her a well-worn robe,  
 And for a crown her musky locks divine.  
 Her cheeks were made not up : she only wore  
 What God had given her—a Cypress she,  
 Surmounted by a new moon that diffused  
 A lustre o’er the new throne where she sat.  
 Now when Mihrán Sitád came and beheld  
 He saw none like to her, and, being shrewd

Of heart and counsel, knew that king and queen  
 Were fooling him. The damsel used her hands  
 As kerchief for her eyes. Mihrán Sitád  
 Grew wroth anew and told the slaves : “ The Sháh  
 Hath many a bracelet, crown, and throne, and I  
 Choose her that lacketh crown and ornament,  
 For these will make her still more beautiful.  
 I came to show discretion in my choice ;  
 I came not to procure brocade of Chín.”

The queen replied : “ Old man ! thou speakest not  
 One gracious word and art not well advised  
 If thou preferrest such a child as this  
 To these princesses who are gracious, fair,  
 And wise, have reached a marriageable age,  
 And kindle hearts—girls tall as cypress-trees,  
 With cheeks like spring and very well aware  
 Of all the worship that is due to kings.”

Mihrán Sitád said : “ If the Khán shall act  
 Unfairly in this matter let him know  
 That Núshírwán, the monarch of the world,  
 Will term me an old knave. The one that sitteth,  
 All unadorned by bracelet, torque, and crown,  
 Upon the ivory throne best pleaseth me ;  
 But, if your Highnesses will not consent,  
 With your permission I will go my ways.”

C. 1703

The queen observed his words. His policy  
 And conduct made her muse. The crafty envoy  
 Then left her, went back to the Khán, and told  
 All that had passed. The Khán saw him perturbed,  
 And knew : “ This shrewd old man is great and apt  
 For delicate affairs.”

The prudent king  
 Sat with his counsellors, put forth the throng,  
 And, when the place for conclave had been cleared,  
 The readers of the stars who bore in hand  
 Their Rúman astrolabes, the mighty men,

And all the chiefs, attended. Then the Khán  
Commanded every loyal liege to mark  
The aspect of the sky. The sages scanned  
The stars to find out how the Khán should act,  
And as to his alliance with the Sháh,  
And at the last said thus : “ Let not, O king !  
Thy heart be vexed by evil any whit,  
Because this matter can but end in good,  
And time will count thy foemen’s counsels ill.  
This is the purpose of high heaven herein—  
The horoscope and prosperous event—  
That from the daughter of the Khán and from  
The Sháh’s loins a throne-gracing prince will come ;  
The country of Írán,<sup>1</sup> the men of name  
And worth in Chín, his praises shall proclaim.”

## § 10

*How the Khán sent his Daughter, escorted by Mihrán,  
with a Letter and Treasures to Núshírwán*

The Khán, on hearing this, was glad of heart,  
Smiled too the sunlike queen. When they had purged  
Their hearts of artifice they set the envoy  
Before them and told all that he should know  
About the queen’s child kept secluded thus,  
Whom from her sire Mihrán Sitád received  
On the victorious king of kings’ behalf.  
The deputy received, the Khán bestowed,  
The only daughter that the queen had borne.  
The handmaids came with gifts, came joyfully  
Before the king, and afterwards a treasure,  
Comprising goods of all sorts, was prepared—  
Dínárs, gems, torques, and crowns, a turquoise litter,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

An ivory throne, and one of aloe-wood  
 From Hind, with gold and divers jewelry  
 Inlaid, and with each throne a royal crown ;                           C. 1704  
 A hundred horses and a hundred camels,  
 The horses saddled and the camels bearing  
 Brocade of Chín, and forty tapestries  
 Of cloth of gold enriched with emeralds.  
 Of carpets too he laid a hundred loads  
 On camels, and brought forth three hundred handmaids,  
 And saw that all were mounted for the journey,  
 Each with a flag in hand—the use in Chín.  
 The Khán, victorious of fortune, bade  
 To set up on an elephant a throne  
 Embossed with gold and silver all incrusted  
 With gems unworn, and rear a flaunting flag  
 That made the ground all viewless with brocade.  
 It took a hundred men to carry forth,  
 And raise, that standard skyward from the plain.  
 A litter tricked out with brocade and gold  
 Contained the maiden Gem. Three hundred hand-  
 maids,  
 All blithe of heart and bright of countenance,  
 Accompanied that moon-faced one. He sent  
 His daughter to the Sháh with troops for escort,  
 And forty eunuchs to precede the slaves,  
 And march before her with rejoicing hearts.  
 The preparations over, came the scribe,  
 And brought with him rose-water, musk, and silk.  
 The Khán then wrote a letter like the Artang,<sup>1</sup>  
 All illustration, colour, scent, and beauty,  
 And first of all gave praises to the Maker,  
 Lord of the world, all-watchful and all-seeing :—  
 “ He fashioned all things by divine decree  
 To guide His servants to predestined ends.

<sup>1</sup> Arzhang, another form of the same word, in the original. For Artang, see Vol. ii. p. 19 and note.

My crown is the Iránian king of kings.  
 Not for my daughter's sake have I desired  
 A league with him, but hearing from the wise,  
 The great men and the wary-hearted priests,  
 About his Grace, his majesty, and throne,  
 I sought for intercourse and league with him  
 Because so just a ruler girdeth not  
 His loins in all the world, or one so great  
 In manhood, victory, and mastery,  
 In Grace, mien, throne, and crown, while holy God  
 Sustaineth him with justice and with knowledge,  
 With Faith and wisdom. Lo ! we have dispatched,  
 According to our rites, our very Eye  
 To Núshírwán the Sháh, commanding her  
 To serve him as his slave when she shall pass  
 Behind his curtains. From his Grace and insight  
 She will learn wisdom and acquire his ways  
 And usages. May wit and fortune guide thee,  
 Be majesty and knowledge thy supports."

They set the seal upon that musk of Chín,  
 And gave the letter to the ambassador  
 C. 1705 With compliments. The Khán prepared for him  
 A robe of honour past all precedent  
 As given by the great ones of the world  
 In public or in private to an envoy.  
 The Khán gave presents also to the suite,  
 And made them happy with dínárs and musk.  
 He travelled with his daughter and the goods,  
 The beasts and elephants caparisoned,  
 Until he reached the bank of the Jihún,  
 And poured his heart's blood from his eyes the  
 while ;  
 He thence betook him homeward with full heart  
 And, in his daughter's stead, had pain for comrade ;  
 Howbeit he delayed till they had crossed,  
 And reached dry land upon the further side.

When tidings came about Míhrán Sitád<sup>1</sup>  
 The folk presented gifts and offerings,  
 And all with one consent called blessings down  
 Upon the Sháh and on the chief of Chín.  
 With hearts rejoiced with largess and with gifts,  
 And all disposed for hospitality  
 And amity, the folk decked road and city,  
 And showered drachms upon the royal bride.  
 Toward Ámwí and Marv's unwatered ways  
 All earth was like a pheasant's plumes, and thou  
 Hadst said of all the journey to Bastám,  
 And to Gurgán : "The earth saw not the sky  
 For decorations and triumphal arches  
 In waste and town wherethrough the progress lay."  
 Men, women, children, from the palaces,  
 Met where that Idol brought from Chín would pass,  
 Showered on her escort drachms from overhead,  
 And sifted o'er them musk and ambergris.  
 The scents were mixed on salvers, and the world  
 Was full of din from trump and kettledrum.  
 The horses' manes were drenched with musk and  
 wine,  
 And sweets and drachms were scattered under-foot,  
 While through the din of rebeck, harp, and pipe,  
 There was no room on earth for rest and sleep.  
 Now when the Idol reached the royal bower,  
 And Núshírwán had looked within the litter,  
 He saw a Cypress with the orbéd moon  
 Above it and upon the moon a crown  
 Of ambergris. There was another too  
 Of musky coils joined chain-wise, link on link,  
 The links entrammelled, plaited daintily,  
 And curiously entwined like civet ring-work  
 Upon a rose's petal, while beneath  
 The ring-work shone the planet Jupiter.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Sháh Núshírwán was all astound thereat,  
 And o'er her oft invoked the name of God,  
 Assigned her a fit dwelling for her own,  
 And they made ready for that Moon a throne.

## § 11

*How the Khán withdrew, and how Núshírwán marched  
 from Gurgán to Taisafún*

C. 1706

When of Írán and of the Íráanian king  
 News reached the Khán of Chín, and of the joy  
 Wherewith his child had been received, and how  
 The alliance caused good cheer and happiness,  
 He gave up Sughd and Samarkand and Chách,  
 And sent his crown on to Káchár Báshí.  
 Now when the hosts of Chín had left these states •  
 The Sháh sent marchlords thither. He renewed  
 The world by equity, and old and young  
 Could sleep upon their backs. All everywhere  
 Called blessings down on him with hands upraised  
 To heaven : “ O Ruler over space and time !  
 Keep in Sháh Núshírwán this justice still,  
 And turn the ills of fortune from his life,  
 For by his Grace divine and majesty  
 Both public ills and private have been banned.  
 What time he reached Gurgán to hunt none saw  
 The Khán’s face smile ; the cavaliers of Chín  
 Forwent their food and sleep, and none off-saddled ;  
 Three hundred thousand Turkman troops dispersed  
 Instead of striving and of combating ;  
 There is no need to string the bow, for none  
 Of Chín, or small or great, remaineth here,  
 Such were the Grace divine and royal mien  
 Wherewith the savage Lion sought the chase ;

Such were his reputation and his star  
That fortune was the comrade of his throne.”

Then from the regions lying 'twixt Ámwí,  
Chách, and Khutan, the nobles met and said :—  
“ These spacious regions full of pleasures,  
Of riding-grounds, of palaces, and halls,  
From Chách and the Tarak to Samarkand  
And Sughd <sup>1</sup> are wholly waste—the home of owls.  
They of Chaghán, Shiknán, Khatlán, and Balkh,  
Have all experienced dark and bitter days.  
Great are our pain and sorrow when we name  
Bukhárá and Kharazm, Ámwí and Zam.  
Once none gat rest and sleep, so tyrannous  
And cruel was Afrásiyáb ! Howbeit  
We found deliverance when Kai Khusrau  
Came, and the world had peace from bickering.  
Then when Arjásپ gained lustihead these marches  
Were filled with anguish and calamity,  
But when Gushtásپ marched from Írán to battle  
Arjásپ perceived no tarrying-place, and then  
The world had quiet from his enterprises.  
May heaven ne'er befriend him ! Afterwards,  
What time Narsí became the chief, these coasts  
Were full of misery, but when Shápúr,  
Son of Urmuzd, usurped, and when Narsí<sup>C. 1707</sup>  
Discerned not hand from foot, the world found justice,  
And quiet, and the hand of Áhiman  
Was stayed from evil. When the Khán bore off  
The world from Yazdagird, and had acquired  
Dexterity in ill, there came the world-lord,  
Bahrám Gúr, to afflict and trouble him,  
To make the states like Paradise with justice,  
And scatter the unseemly and the foul.  
So Khúshnawáz, what time Pírúz was Sháh,  
Filled all the world with bloodshed, heat, and anguish,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And perish Faghánish that son of his  
 With all his unjust kith and kin ! And now  
 The world-lord Núshírwán hath occupied  
 Our marches and hath made us rich indeed !  
 For ever may his policy endure,  
 And may the whole world be at one with him.  
 Now that the earth beholdeth justice we  
 Will contemplate no travail, shed no blood.”<sup>1</sup>

Then from the Haitálians, Turkmans, and Khutan  
 The people met by the Gulzaryún  
 From every quarter where some shrewd priest lived,  
 Or other potentate good, learned, and wise,  
 While all the Turkmans that were well advised  
 Drew to the Sháh—a mighty company.  
 It was the policy of all these troops  
 To come before the Sháh with offerings,  
 And when they came before him, when they came,  
 All with one heart and tongue, the monarch’s court  
 Was so fulfilled with people that they barred  
 The way to ant and gnat ! All louted low,  
 Called praises down upon the Sháh, and said :—  
 “ O Sháh ! we are thy slaves and live to do  
 Thy bidding in the world. We all of us  
 Are nobles dight for war and rend the hides  
 Of leopards on the field.”

The king of kings  
 Received their gifts, and then they left the presence,  
 Their leader Faghánish. Behind him came  
 A troop of youthful warriors. When thus  
 They had found favour in the monarch’s sight  
 The chamberlain went to the palace-gate  
 With formal greetings and with compliments,  
 And lodged them through the city. Afterwards  
 The king of kings, that worshipper of God,

<sup>1</sup> The historical reminiscences put into the mouths of dwellers beyond the Oxus and even the Jaxartes are of course valueless.

Passed from the audience-chamber to the dust,  
 And offered up thanksgivings to the Almighty :—  
 “ O Thou above vicissitudes of fortune !  
 Thou gav’st me Grace, accomplishment, and counsel,  
 And art my Guide in all things good and ill,  
 For all that hear of me seek not thereafter  
 The crown of majesty, but all submit  
 To be my lieges. None hath pluck to fight.  
 Birds on the mountains, fishes in the water,  
 Remain awake to watch what time I slumber ;  
 All the wild creatures are my sentinels,  
 The mighty of the world mine underlings ;  
 No abject he whom Thou dost choose who art  
 The world’s sole Lord and giv’st me strength therein  
 That not an ant may sleep aggrieved by me.”

C. 1708

’Twas thus he spake with many tears to God :  
 Canst find within the world a king like him ?  
 Then from his place of prayer he sought his throne,  
 And they prepared to quit Gurgán. The blast  
 Of trumpets and the din of brazen cymbals  
 Ascended from the court. He called to horse,  
 And loaded up, invoking the All-giver.  
 He took dínárs, brocade, crowns, belts, and treasures  
 Of drachms and gems, steeds, female slaves, and  
 crowns,  
 The turquoise litter and the ivory throne.  
 The heart-alluring handmaids and the thralls  
 Of all descriptions mounted on the saddle.  
 The Sháh dispatched them all to Taisafún,  
 Preceded by the women-folk of Chín,  
 Who fared auspiciously and cheerfully  
 Surrounded by the eunuchs. As high priest,  
 Mihrán Sitád accompanied the queen,  
 The daughter of the Khán, and thus the treasures  
 And baggage went toward Taisafún. A band  
 Composed of warriors only—all the best

And noblest of the mighty men—approached  
 Afoot Ázar Ábádagán while troops  
 Came from each province, soldiers from Gilán  
 And Dílamán,<sup>1</sup> the mountains of Balúch,  
 And deserts of Sarúch, and warriors  
 From Lúch, all came with gifts and offerings  
 Before the tent-enclosure of the king,  
 Whereat the famous chiefs rejoiced and thought :—  
 “The wolf’s claws grow too short to reach the sheep !”

World without end strife with Balúch had raged,  
 And filled the cities with distress and anguish,  
 But by the Grace of Núshírwán the sky  
 Had changed its use and favour.<sup>2</sup> Wheresoever  
 The host was wont to pass it did not use  
 To harm a crop, to ask for bread and water,  
 But made its sleeping-quarters on its route.  
 The Sháh on this wise went about the world,  
 Surveying every place, both field and waste.  
 He saw that all the world was full of crops,  
 While sheep and oxen filled the hills and plains.

C. 1709 A region ne’er before inhabited,  
 Where none had looked on sowing and on reaping,  
 He now surveyed and found it bearing fruit,  
 Found too a family in every house.  
 The trees were laden through the Grace divine  
 Of that victorious master of the world.  
 At one stage of the progress of the Sháh  
 The ambassador of Cæsar came with presents,  
 With silver and withal a throne of gold,  
 And Rúman jewels and brocade—a gift  
 That covered all the surface of the ground :  
 So great a tribute ne’er had come from Rúm.  
 Ten ox-hides had been filled up with dínárs—  
 The tribute and the taxes of three years—  
 And with the presents Cæsar had dispatched

<sup>1</sup> = Dilam.<sup>2</sup> See p. 241 seq.

A letter to the famous king. They set  
 The envoy in the presence, and the Sháh  
 Was all attention while they read the letter.  
 'Twas full of warm expressions of good will  
 About the gifts that had been sent to him :—  
 “Hereafter will I send thee greater gifts,  
 For these are merely meant for largessing.”

The Sháh received them, mounted on his steed,  
 And sought the temple of Ázargashasp.  
 When, still afar, he saw the place of worship  
 His cheeks were hidden by his tears. He lighted  
 Down from his steed and, sacred twigs<sup>1</sup> in hand,  
 Made prayer with bated breath ;<sup>2</sup> then drawing near  
 The Fire he worshipped and adored the Maker.  
 He gave the temple-bursar all the gold,  
 And all the many gems that he had brought,  
 And showered gold and silver on the archmages,  
 Bestowing on them likewise gems and raiment.  
 All were enriched by him and sought the Fire  
 To offer up their thanks in muttered tones,<sup>3</sup>  
 And blessed withal the righteous judge of earth.  
 He parted thence for Taisafún ; the host  
 Made earth a Mount Bístún. That righteous Sháh,  
 On reaching any city, used to give  
 Much gold and silver to the mendicants.  
 Through all the wealth that he disposed of thus  
 The realm was stuffed with treasure and with drachms.  
 From Taisafún he drew toward Madá'in,  
 For there he wont to keep his treasures' key.  
 He took the Rose of Chín<sup>4</sup> and forty more  
 Withal. Mihrán Sitád fared on before.

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 80, *s.v. Barsam.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id., s.v. Báj.*      <sup>3</sup> *Id.*      <sup>4</sup> Literally “Rose-garden.”

## § 12

*Discourse on the Justice of Núshírwán and how  
Mortals had Peace under his Usages*

C. 1710

When Núshírwán ascended to his throne  
 In pomp, with his good fortune for his mate,  
 The world was decked like Paradise with justice,  
 With goodness, and wealth, had rest from strife,  
 Inequity, and bloodshed, everywhere,  
 And was renewed by Grace divine. “They have,”  
 Thou wouldst have said, “bound both the hands of  
 evil.”

None knew of pillage, raid, or putting forth  
 The hand to ill ; all came at his behest  
 From darkness and perverseness to the way.  
 If any dropped a drachm upon the road  
 A thief would shun that wealth ! As for brocade  
 And for dínárs, on land and sea, by daylight,  
 And in the hours for sleep, the ill-disposed  
 Would look not to that quarter out of fear,  
 And through the justice of the Sháh, the world-lord.  
 The world was pargettéd like Paradise,  
 And dale and desert were fulfilled with wealth.  
 Dispatches went to all the provinces,  
 To every man of name and potentate,  
 While from the Turkman merchants and from Chín,  
 Sakláb and every province, came such store  
 Of musk-bags and of silk of Chín, of trinkets  
 Of Rúm and of the land of Hind, as made  
 Irán like jocund Paradise ; its dust  
 Was ambergris, its bricks were gold. The world  
 Turned toward Irán and rested from distress  
 And bickering. “The breezes shed rose-water,”  
 Thou wouldst have said, and men had peace from pain  
 And leech. The moisture showered upon the rose

In season, and the farmer was not sad  
 Through lack of rain. The world grew full of herbage  
 And cattle, plains and valleys were all flowers,  
 Rooftrees, and dwellings, all the streams seemed seas,  
 And roses Pleiad-like within the gardens.

Men learned to speak new tongues within Írán,  
 Illumed their souls with knowledge, and returned  
 Thanksgiving to their guide, the Sháh, for all  
 The traffickers that came from every march  
 And land, from Turkistán, Chín, Hind, and Rúm,  
 While cattle multiplied amid the herbage.

All learnéd men and ready speakers found  
 A place at court. The great, the men of lore,  
 And archimages were esteemed, the wicked  
 Shook fearful of calamity. What time  
 The sun adorned the world a proclamation  
 Would go up from the court : " All ye that are  
 The servants of the monarch of the world !  
 Keep not ill hidden, any one of you !  
 Whoë'er hath toiled at any task shall have  
 A treasure in proportion to his travail.

Prefer your claims before our chamberlain  
 That he may seek your recompense from us.  
 If any creditor shall come and ask

For payment from the poor, my treasurer  
 Will pay the debt because the destitute  
 Must not be troubled. Whosoe'er shall look

Upon another's wife, and his accuser  
 Appeal to us, the offender shall see naught

But pit and gibbet, bondage in the pit,  
 And arrows on the gibbet. If men find

A horse at large, and any husbandman  
 Complain thereof at court, let it be slain  
 Upon that tilth, and he shall have the carcass

Who had the scath, the horseman shall be horseless,  
 And fare afoot before Ázargashasp

To tender his excuse, the muster-master  
 Shall strike his name off from the muster-roll,  
 They shall lay low his dwelling, and the offender,  
 Whate'er his rank may be, shall be degraded.  
 The Sháh can not be of one mind with such,  
 Will have the righteous only at his court,  
 And at our court God grant there never be  
 Those that approve not of our policy.”

## § 13

*How Búzurjmíhr counselled Núshírwán and discoursed  
 on good Deeds and Words*

One day the world-lord, as he sat rejoicing,  
 Gave audience to the mighty men of wisdom.  
 He spake with smiles and open countenance,  
 And seated Búzurjmíhr upon the throne,  
 Who offered to the king such praise as made  
 His heart like jocund spring, and thus he said :—  
 “ O righteous judge so fresh of visage ! may  
 Fault-finders never find a fault in thee.  
 Blest king of kings, whose fortune prospereth,  
 The wise, triumphant master of the world !  
 I erst recorded in the olden tongue  
 Some thoughts upon a roll of royal paper,  
 Which I entrusted to thy treasurer  
 Till there might come a season when the Sháh  
 Would read it, but I see the mystery  
 Is one that laggard heaven will disclose not.  
 What though a man shall quit his seat at feasts,  
 And take his life within his hands in fight,  
 Shall sweep the earth of enemies and be  
 Secure against the toils of Áhrimans,  
 Shall be the great king over all the world,  
 And consummate his wishes one by one,

Shall win the wide world by his bravery,  
 Make rosary and pleasance, park and palace,  
 Shall lay up wealth, have sons surrounding him,  
 And reckon many days of happiness,  
 Shall bring together warriors and wealth,  
 Shall decorate his palaces and halls,  
 And, while the poor are toiling for his sake,  
 Amass on all sides treasure and renown,  
 Still willy nilly he but gathereth dust ;  
 His lifetime will not last a century.  
 He will be dust, his toils will bear no fruit  
 For him, and all his wealth will be his foe's.  
 No children, throne or crown or royal hall,  
 Or treasury or army will be his,  
 And when he ceaseth to pursue the wind  
 None in the world will give a thought to him.  
 Of all his doings when his time is over  
 A good name will be his memorial.

In this world there are two things that endure,  
 And only two, the rest will last with none—  
 Choice sayings and good doings : these will last  
 Until the world shall end, auspicious Sháh !  
 Time's course is such that fame and honest speech  
 Spoil not through sun and water, wind and dust.  
 The modest man and virtuous is blest.

Avoid, O king ! with all thy might the faults  
 That shame the soul. Harm not but help ; thus Faith  
 And precedent prescribe. I leave behind me  
 Words that, I ween, ne'er will grow obsolete."

He oped the king's shrewd heart who questioned him  
 On many points : " Who is the glorious man,  
 Whose heart is glad, who sigheth not ? "

He answered :—

" The innocent, the man whom Áhriman  
 Hath caused not to transgress."

The Sháh then asked him

C. 1712

Concerning guile, the Dív's way, and the way  
 Of God, the world's Lord. Búzurjmihr replied :—  
 “ To do God's will is best, for in both worlds  
 The Grace is His. The door of evil leadeth  
 To Áhri man who is the enemy  
 Of those that worship God. The high-souled man  
 Is blessed in the world, for his adornments  
 Are holiness and modesty. Since knowledge  
 Safe-guardeth him his life is one of ease,  
 He hath nobility and righteousness,  
 And knocketh not upon the door of guile,  
 And loss. When he is dead his soul will be  
 A foe to what pertaineth to the body.  
 He is not negligent about them both,  
 But is concerned for either sword or scabbard.”<sup>1</sup>

C. 1713 Then Núshírwán inquired : “ Among the chiefs  
 What man attaineth to the highest standard ? ”

Said Búzurjmihr : “ The man that hath most know-  
 ledge,  
 And most controlment over his desires.”

“ Who is the man of knowledge,” said the Sháh,  
 “ For knowledge is a matter hid in men ? ”

“ The man that neither severeth heart from God,”  
 He answered, “ at the bidding of the Dív,  
 Nor out of wantonness obeyeth one  
 That is the foe of souls and wisdom's snare.  
 Ten Áhrimans there are with lion's might,  
 Who lord it over wisdom and the soul.”

“ What then are these ten dívs,” said Núshírwán,  
 “ Since wisdom hath good reason to bewail them ? ”

He thus made answer, saying : “ Greed and Need  
 Are two o'erweening dívs and puissant.<sup>2</sup>  
 The rest are Anger, Envy, Strife, Revenge,  
 Backbiting, Treachery, and Faith Impure.  
 The tenth dív is Ingratitude to men

<sup>1</sup> Five couplets omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. vi. p. 146.

For benefits and Ignorance of God.”

The Sháh said : “ Of these ten dívs, ruinous  
And black, which Áhriman is lustiest ? ”

He answered Núshírwán thus, saying : “ Greed  
Is a tyrannic dív, the last to go.

Him never wilt thou see content in aught,  
But ever labouring for something more.

All those that look on Need behold him blind,  
And sallow with anxiety and pain.

The dív of Envy is the next, O king !

And is an ailment that no leech can cure.

His soul is pained to see one prosperous.

Strife is another dív and passionate,

For ever quick to put his hand to ill ;

Revenge, another, wrathful, turbulent,

And instant to arouse the battle-cry

In men, unloving and ungenerous—

A dív malignant and with frowning face ;

Another, Slander, knowing naught but lies,

And doing all his traffic in the dark ;

Another, Treachery, with double face,

Who feareth not the Master of the world,

But flingeth strife and vengeance 'twixt two men,

And toileth to break up alliances :

The last, Ingratitude and Ignorance—

A witless dív unconscious of all good,

Contemptuous of rede and modesty,

And in whose sight both good and ill are one.”

The king then asked the sage : “ How doth the  
Dív

Make war against the heart, and what hath God  
Bestowed upon His servants so that they  
May counteract the Dív ? ”

That man of Faith

Replied : “ Wise, glorious Sháh ! against the sword  
Of dívs the coat of mail is wisdom ; that

C. 1714

Illumineth the sage's heart and mind,  
 Recordeth what is passed and nourisheth  
 The soul with knowledge. Oh ! may wisdom be  
 The guider of thy mind because the way  
 Is long before thee, and if wisdom prove  
 A second nature, as the saying is,  
 So that the heart is fearless of the Dív,  
 The good heart will find pleasure in the world,  
 And not frequent the portal of desire.  
 Now will I utter words of hope to guide  
 The heart to joy : the sage is always hopeful,  
 And seeth naught but happiness from time,  
 Not for a moment meditateth ill,  
 And chooseth not the bow's path but the arrow's.  
 Moreover one contented doth not stretch  
 His hand to treasure or fatigue himself ;  
 He that despiseth drachm and treasury  
 Will fleet his sum of days in happiness.  
 Moreover one that is devote to God <sup>1</sup>  
 In all will turn not from His ordinance  
 For toil or treasure or the fear of man ;  
 He hath no strain of evil in his nature,  
 And by that token he is virtuous too  
 Because he will sell not God's way for aught."

Said Núshírwán : " Which is the royal way  
 Conducting us to good ? "

He answered thus :—

" The way of wisdom doubtlessly surpasseth  
 All knowledge. Likewise being well disposed  
 Will keep a man in honour all his days ;  
 While of the qualities the mightiest  
 Is in my view contentment with one's lot ;  
 The most agreeable, which refresheth most  
 In travail, and the seemliest, is hope.  
 In greed I see the weariest of all,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

For that is never satiate of wealth."

The Sháh said : " Which accomplishment is best,  
The one whereby aspirants win to greatness ? "

He answered : " Knowledge, for the sage is greatest  
Among the great as clutching not at treasure,  
And holding of himself aloof from travail."

The Sháh then asked him : " How shall we proceed  
To overcome the might of enemies ? "

" Ill-doing is the enemy," he answered,  
" Alike of wisdom and the soul serene."—

The righteous judge then asked the sage and said :—  
" Is talent or is application better ? "

The sage made answer, saying : " Application  
Is more than natural ability,  
For application furnisheth the mind,  
While talent only maketh talking easy,  
And, when untrained, is wretched, vile, and weak,  
But application strengtheneth the soul."

" How can the mind be polished," said the Sháh,  
" And what accomplishments commend the body ? "

" Now," said he, " will I make a full reply,                           C. 1715  
If thou wilt take it from me point by point :  
Since wisdom is itself God's robe of honour  
No thought can gain it and no evil touch it ;  
So one accomplished but withal conceited  
Should have no credit for accomplishments,  
While no wise man regardeth with disdain  
The merest peasant well-disposed by nature,  
And though a sage join bounty to high birth,  
Join knowledge, conduct, equity, yet will  
His greatness, his addition, and uprightness  
All suffer if his natural bent be vicious."

Then Núshírwán inquired : " Illustrious scholar !  
Doth greatness come from toil or doth the world-lord  
Get crown and throne from fortune ? "

He replied :—

“The fortune and accomplishment of men  
 Are mates allied and joined like soul and body,  
 The body visible, the soul concealed.  
 The body is man’s instrument for toil,  
 When wakeful fortune shall bestir itself,  
 But by his travail ne’er will he attain  
 To greatness if good fortune guide him not.  
 Again, the world is all deceit and wind,  
 Or memory of a dream that vanisheth  
 When one awaketh, whether he beheld  
 A pleasant vision or a painful one.”

A question then occurred to Núshírwán ;  
 He asked the sage : “Who should be praised ?”

He answered :—

“A king that doth adorn the throne and hath  
 His strength from fortune will, if he doth justly,  
 And is of fair repute, attain his end  
 In word and deed.”

“What man is sorrowful,”  
 The Sháh said, “luckless, and unprofitable ?”

The sage replied : “The wicked mendicant,  
 Who loseth both this world and Paradise.”

“Who is the luckless one,” rejoined the Sháh,  
 “For whom we must weep always bitterly ?”

And Búzurjmihr replied : “The man of know-  
 ledge,

Whose face is sallow through his evil deeds.”

The Sháh asked further : “Who is the contented,  
 And who is anxious to increase his store ?”

He made response : “He that regardeth not  
 The revolutions of the turning sky.”

Then Núshírwán : “What man best suiteth us ?”  
 And Búzurjmihr replied : “The gentlest man.”

“But who is gentle,” asked the Sháh, “for why  
 The hasty give us cause to weep ?”

He answered :—

"Mark him that shunneth converse with fault-finders ;

That man hath modesty and gentleness,  
With wisdom, counsel, and propriety."

The famed king asked him : " Who is hopefulllest  
Of men ? "

" The most industrious," he said,  
" Whose ears are open unto knowledge most."

C. 1716

The monarch of the world inquired of him  
Of privy rumour as to good and ill.  
He thus returned reply : " It is the cause  
Of ample chatter but an empty brain.  
Say what they will the earth is still in place ;  
I know not how the other world doth fare."

Then Núshírwán : " What land most prospereth,  
And how have we contributed therein ? "

" The justice of the world-lord," he replied,  
" Establisheth a land's prosperity."

Then Núshírwán inquired : " Inform me this :  
What man is shrewdest, most approved, and prudent  
Within the world because the adept increaseth  
One's lustre ? "

He replied : " An ancient sage  
That hath been mindful of experience."

Said Núshírwán : " Who is the happy man  
That liveth upright and right glad ? "

He answered :—

" One free from apprehension and possessed  
Of gold and silver ? "

Núshírwán inquired :—

" Which of us best deserveth praise, and who  
Is most approved by all ? "

He answered thus :—

" He that can hide his need and can suppress  
Strife, envy, greed, revenge, and jealousy :  
That man will find approval in the world."

The Sháh inquired of the long-suffering,  
Whose crown is patience.

Búzurjmihr replied :—

“ That is the man grown hopeless, with heart dark,  
And yet his counsel is sun-bright, or else  
The man that hath but little time to live,  
And yet hath entered on some vast employ.”

The Sháh said : “ Who hath grief so much at heart  
That he is weary of his life through care ? ”

And Búzurjmihr made answer thus : “ The man  
Fall’n from a throne and desperate of fortune.”

The exalted king inquired of him and said :—  
“ Who of us hath his heart in sorry plight ? ”

The sage replied : “ The man that is not wise,  
And rich man childless.”

“ Whose heart,” asked the Sháh,  
“ Is sad through trouble and calamity ? ”

He answered thus : “ The upright man of know-  
ledge

O'er whom besottedness is sovereign.”

The Sháh said : “ Who is fullest of despair  
Although possessing power and reputation ? ”

“ The man that falleth from a lofty throne,”  
He said, “ retaining still his pride of birth.”

Sháh Núshírwán inquired of him and said :—

“ O man of foresight and of ardent soul !  
Whom knowest thou unfamed and lustreless,  
And yet deserving both of love and pardon ? ”

He answered thus : “ The man of many faults,  
The culpable, the mendicant, and needy.”

C. 1717 The Sháh inquired and said : “ Now tell me truly :  
Who is it that repenteth of the past ? ”

He said : “ The great king who, when he shall put  
The black cap on upon his dying-day,<sup>1</sup>  
Repenteth with a heart all terror-stricken

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 109.

Of all his life's ingratitude to God,  
And he moreover who hath undergone  
Abundant travail for ungrateful men."

The Sháh inquired : " O sage that dost combine  
All excellence ! know'st thou of aught that maketh  
The body profitable and is dear  
To all men's hearts withal ? "

He made reply :—

" In health the heart will seek but happiness,  
But when through suffering the life is failing  
The body's one desire is then for health."

The Sháh rejoined : " Good man ! expound to me  
Which is the strongest of the appetites ? "

Said Búzurjmíhr : " The great are not exposed  
To such solicitings and, since their bodies,  
Which have no wish unsatisfied, fare well,  
Have only need to seek their heart's desire."

The Sháh then asked his guide : " What is the  
heart's  
Chief care ? "

" The sage," he answered, " would inform  
His questioner that there are three chief cares—  
First, apprehension of the evil day,  
Lest ill then should befall the innocent ;  
Next, of the practice of a treacherous friend,  
Who fain would have brain, life and blood and skin ;  
And thirdly, of a great but unjust king,  
Who knoweth not the worthless from the good.  
How happy is the course of time with him  
That hath a prudent friend and counsellor !  
A bright world and a great king who is just—  
Thou'l get from heaven no greater excellence."

The Sháh next asked of Faith and right—the means  
Of banning fraud and falsehood. He replied :—  
" Incline, O Sháh ! to one of Faith whose mind  
Is filled with thoughts of God—the man averse

From guile and from the Dív's way through his awe  
 Of holy God, the Master of the world,  
 And hearkening to His law. None such will barter  
 The Faith."

The Sháh then asked concerning kings,  
 Whose rule is o'er the holy : " Which of them  
 Is of victorious fortune and throne-worthy ? "

He answered thus : " The just possessed of  
 wisdom,  
 Of counsel,<sup>1</sup> modesty, and excellence."

The Sháh then questioned him about old friends,  
 Such as are one with us in ear and speech.  
 He made this answer : " Magnanimity  
 And generosity are good in them ;  
 They will wish thee no ill to please another,  
 But aid and succour thee in thy distress."

c. 1718 Said Núshírwán to him : " Who hath most  
 friends  
 That are to him as his own blood and skin ? "

He thus gave answer : " Save the faithless man  
 All would be joined to him whose heart is good,  
 And all the more the kinder that he is,  
 The more obliging, and conformable."

The Sháh inquired : " Who hath most enemies  
 And most antagonistic ? "

Búzurjmíhr  
 Returned him this reply : " The insolent,  
 For he incurreth many a malison,  
 And also any one that speaketh harshly,  
 Is ever frowning, and is close of fist."

Then said the Sháh : " Who is the constant  
 friend,  
 One who will weep for pain of severance ? "

He answered : " 'Tis the friend that faileth not,  
 Is never vexed, and feareth not to suffer."

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

"What lasteth," said the Sháh, "and doth not waste ?"

He made reply : "A benefit conferred  
Is ever present to a worthy friend."

"What hath the chiefest lustre," said the Sháh,  
"And is a crown upon the head of all ?"

He said : "The sage's mind which mastereth  
His passions."

Said the Sháh : "O lord of love !  
What is there wider than the turning sky ?"

He answered : "First, a king with open hand,  
And next, the heart of one devote to God."

The Sháh inquired : "What is the goodliest way  
Wherein a wise man may exalt his head ?"

"O great king ! ne'er bestow," he made reply,  
"Thy treasure on unholy men. For thee  
To deal with the unthankful is to fling  
Bricks unbaked into water."

Said the Sháh :—  
"What toil diminisheth man's greed for treasure ?"

Then Búzurjmíhr replied : "O king ! for ever  
Be thy heart like young spring. For very travail  
The servant of a king of evil nature  
Will cease to care for person, life, and wealth."

The Sháh inquired : "What wonder hast thou seen  
Than which a greater cannot be conceived ?"

And Búzurjmíhr made answer to the Sháh :—  
"The turning sky is always wonderful.  
Thou seest one possessed of mastery,  
With crown exalted to the darksome clouds,  
Who cannot tell his left hand from his right,  
Or fortune's gain from loss discriminate ;  
Another man will read the lofty sky,  
And tell the why and the wherefore of the stars,  
Yet heaven still will lead him into straits,  
And evil fortune be his only lot !"

"What thing know'st thou, as heaviest," asked the Sháh ?

He thus returned reply : "The weight of sin."

The Sháh inquired : "Of matters most unseemly,  
Including in the question words and deeds,  
Which is the greatest cause of shame and blame,  
So that all folk pronounce it done amiss ?"

C. 1719

He thus made answer : "Harshness in a king ;  
The persecution of the innocent ;  
The nearness practised by the man of wealth  
That is a niggard as to dress and food ;  
In womankind the loud and strident voice  
Of those whose modesty is forfeited ;  
The infamy of men that do oppression,  
And are high-handed with the indigent ;  
While falsehood in a king or in a man  
Of no account is ugly, foul, and vile."

Of all things in the world, apert or secret,  
"What is that goodly one," said Núshírwán,  
"Whereof the sage will fashion him a breastplate,  
And therewithal illuminate his soul ?"

The sage made answer : "Earnestness of Faith  
Will have but approbation from the world,  
And secondly thanksgiving unto God  
Charactereth a wise and holy man."

Said Núshírwán : "What is it best for kings  
And mighty men to do and to avoid ?  
What is there better than to rule, possess,  
And look on others as inferiors ?  
From what do we do wisely to refrain,  
And what is good to seize upon and keep ?"

The sage replied : "Safeguard thy wrath as  
knowing  
That other folk will keep their eyes on thee ;  
Next, let thy soul be ever on the watch,  
And do thine utmost to abstain from ill.

The soul of him that will forgo revenge,  
And hope instead, will shine as doth the sun.  
By means of sin thou wilt have many pleasures ;  
Reject such pleasures and avoid the sin."

Thanks to the Master of the moon and sun  
The parle of Búzurjmihr and Sháh is done.

## PART IV

### THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GAME OF CHESS INTO ÍRÁN. THE LEGEND OF THE INVENTION OF THE GAME. THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK OF KALÍLA AND DIMNA

#### ARGUMENT

The Rája of Hind sends an envoy to Núshírwán with the game of chess, proposing certain conditions which the Sháh accepts and, with the help of Búzurjmihr, carries out. Búzurjmihr invents the game of nard, and the Sháh sends him with it to the Rája, proposing similar conditions. The poet then tells the legend of the invention of chess—how two sons of an Indian queen quarrelled about the succession to her throne, how one of them perished and how the other, to console his mother, invented the game. Lastly the poet tells how a prince tributary to Núshírwán was sent at his own request to Hind to find the herb that restores the dead to life, and returned bringing instead the Fables of Bidpai.

#### NOTE

§§ 1-3. Here, as in the case of the Yátkár-i-Zaríráñ<sup>1</sup> and the Kárnámak,<sup>2</sup> we are brought into contact with an extant Pahlaví Text—the Tshatrang Námak—which was undoubtedly one of Firðausí's indirect authorities. It was written, probably, about the seventh century A.D., and tells how the king of Hind—Dúwasárm—sent an embassy to Núshírwán with gifts and the game of chess which he had invented. The chess-men were one half of emeralds and the other half of rubies. If the Iránians, he writes to Núshírwán, cannot explain the meaning of the game they must pay him tribute or *vice versá*. None can find the meaning till Búzurjmihr, who has been keeping himself in reserve, appears on the third day, expounds the principle of chess,

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. v. p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* vi. 195.

and proceeds to win twelve games against Déwasárm's envoy. Búzurjmihr then invents nard, which is a form of backgammon, takes it to Hind, puzzles the sages there with it, and returns triumphant with double tribute. The similarity of the Pahlaví Text to the Sháhnáma therefore is obvious. Probably in the original story, no longer extant, the problem set was comparatively a simple one : "What did the board and pieces represent?" And the answer would be: "A battlefield." The misplaced ingenuity of later redactors, however, has added impossible details. A clever man of the time might guess by what the game had been suggested, but the greatest that ever lived could not have evolved the method of play from his inner consciousness, assuming of course his complete previous ignorance of the game. The Pahlaví Text gives the answer correctly and then proceeds to make Búzurjmihr win twelve games right off! In the Sháhnáma the Indian envoy himself gives away the whole thing by stating what the game represents, and then Búzurjmihr in retirement discovers the powers of the various pieces and the way in which they are manipulated—an impossible achievement. It will be observed that Firdausí describes two forms of the game—that introduced into Persia for a board of sixty-four squares, and that, which he considers to be the original, for a board of one hundred squares. The powers of most of the pieces have altered since those days. The tethered minister has changed his sex, become the king's better half, and has acquired as much liberty and preponderance as the most emancipated lady could desire, but the knight's ingenious move has passed unchanged through all vicissitudes.

The Persian word "nard" means a tree-trunk, and it seems not unreasonable to imagine that the game got its name from the resemblance of the pieces on the board to tree-stumps. The author of the Tshatrang-Námak, however, tells us that the game was named after the founder of the Sásánian Dynasty, Nau-Ardshir, which became contracted into nard. Like chess it is symbolical and represents human life as swayed or moulded by fate or fortune whose decrees are written in the aspects of the stars and planets. Thus the board represents the earth, the thirty pieces the days of the month, the colour of the pieces the nights and days, &c. Each throw of the dice too had its proper symbolism. The first represented the Unity of Urmuzd, the second the duality of heaven and earth, the third the triad of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, the fourth the four temperaments—dry, damp, warm, and cold, and so forth. Later Arabic writers

elaborated the symbolism considerably. The dice were taken to represent the heavens and their motions, and the markings on the dice the seven planets in as much as the numbers on the opposite sides added together always make up the number seven, one being opposite to six, two to five, and three to four. The result of a throw was the decree of fate, &c. Nard may be said therefore to surpass chess in sublimity of conception as much as chess surpasses nard in its demands upon the intellect.

Firdausí does not tell us how nard was played, and the introduction of the two kings, apparently on the analogy of those at chess, is quite beside the mark. The poet's whole story of the way in which chess was brought into Irán, and the invention of nard, is quite unhistorical. We have had already in this volume<sup>1</sup> an instance of one king propounding hard questions to another, and in the next volume we shall have the problem of the mysterious box, on the elucidation of which a wager depends as in the present case. According to Mas'údī, nard was invented before chess and before the days of Porus, and chess in the time of one of that king's successors, but he also states that the invention of nard has been attributed to Ardshír Pápakán.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere Mas'údī tells us that Núshírwán had the book of Kalila and Dimma, chess, and a black hair-dye, brought from Hind.<sup>3</sup>

§ 3. Sháhwi, Firdausí's authority for his story of the invention of chess, perhaps may be identified with the Máhwí who collaborated with four others in the work of putting the Bástán-náma into modern Persian in the tenth century A.D.<sup>4</sup>

§ 4. Shádán, son of Barzín, was, it would seem, another of the five above-mentioned collaborators.<sup>5</sup>

We appear to be here on much firmer historical ground than in the corresponding stories of the introduction of chess and the invention of nard. That the Fables of Bidpai were brought from Hind to Persia in the reign of Núshírwán, and translated from the Sanscrit into Pahlaví by Barzwi, seems to be admitted generally, though of course we need not accept all the details of Firdausí's version of the transaction. He is not very accurate in what he says with regard to the later literary history of the famous book. It was not translated into Arabic for the first time in the reign of the Khalifa Mámún (A.D. 813–833) but in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> MM, i. 157 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ii. 203. For the above generally see NPS, II, p. 20 seq.; HS, ii. 250 seq.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. i. p. 67; NIN, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

previous century by Ibn Mūkaffa.<sup>1</sup> Firdausí is correct, however, in stating that the Fables were translated into Persian verse by the first great modern Persian poet, Rúdagí, who enjoyed for many years the munificent patronage of the Sámánid prince, Nasr son of Ahmad (A.D. 914–943), and of the minister Abú-l Fazl, and died in A.D. 954. Unfortunately only fragments of Rúdagí's translation survive. The poet is said to have been blind.

To compare small things with great, the Fables of Bidpai rival the Romance cycle of Alexander in the extent of their diffusion. They are said to have been translated into thirty-eight languages.<sup>2</sup> It is not possible to enter into the subject here, but one illustration of the way in which the Fables passed from one language into another may be given. The earliest English version of them is that of Sir Thomas North—the translator of *Plutarch's Lives*, which Shakespeare put to such good account—and it was published in 1570 under the title of *The Morall Philosophie of Doni*. It comes to us as Sir Walter Blunt came to Henry IV,

“Stain'd with the variation of each soil”

through which it has passed, and its provenance is as follows: “It is the English version of an Italian adaptation of a Spanish translation of a Latin version of a Hebrew translation of an Arabic adaptation of the Pehlevi version of the Indian original.”<sup>3</sup> In Sir Thomas North's version, owing, it is said, to a misunderstanding of the letters when the Fables were translated from the Hebrew, Núshírwán appears as Anestres Castri.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to find that the wish expressed to Núshírwán by Barzwi<sup>5</sup> has been gratified. After all the vicissitudes through which the book has passed his name and the story of his discovery of the Fables still survive. In the English version he appears as Berozias.<sup>6</sup> We may add that apparently the Fables themselves may be traced back to the Indian Jítakas or Birth Stories of Buddha,<sup>7</sup> and that the Jewish race, to which the world is indebted for at least three religions, was the chief agent in the wide dissemination of the fables and the scientific study thereof.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For whom see Vol. vi. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> JFB, p. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Id. p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. xxxii.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 429.

<sup>6</sup> JFB, p. 34 seq.

<sup>7</sup> Id., pp. xiii., xl ix.

<sup>8</sup> Id. p. xxv.

## § 1

*How the Rája of Hind sent the Game of Chess to  
Núshírwán*

Since this discourse, which so delighted thee,  
Hath reached its end let chess our next theme be.  
Thus said the archimage : The Sháh one day  
Adorned his throne with the brocade of Rúm,  
And hung the crown above the ivory throne—  
A throne compact of teak and ivory.

The palace seemed all throne, the throne all Sháh,  
And all his court an army. All the palace  
Was occupied by marchlords and archmages  
From Balkh, Bukhárá, and from every side.  
The monarch of the world received these tidings,  
Brought by his vigilant intelligencers :—

C. 1720 “The envoy of the king of Hind hath come  
With elephants, with parasols, with horsemen  
Of Sind and laden camels fifty score,  
And seeketh to have access to the king.”

The watchful Sháh, on hearing this, forthwith  
Sent certain troops to go and welcome him.  
The envoy of that famed and puissant prince,  
On coming to the great king’s presence, did  
Obeisance, as the use of nobles is,  
With praises of the Maker of the world,  
And gave the Sháh abundant gems as gifts,  
With earrings, elephants, and parasols.  
These Indian parasols were decked with gold  
With many sorts of jewels set therein.  
He oped the bales within the court itself,  
And brought their whole contents before the Sháh.  
There were much gold and silver in the bales  
With musk, fresh aloe-wood, and ambergris,  
Gems, diamonds, and burnished Indian swords ;

The Rája had amassed from every hand  
 The products of Kannúj and Mái. They laid them  
 Before the throne. The prince of sleepless fortune  
 Viewed and dispatched to his own treasury  
 All that the Rája had so toiled for. Then  
 The envoy brought a letter which the Rája  
 Had written upon silk to Núshírwán,  
 And also, what had made a treasury void,  
 A chess-board wrought with cunning workmanship.  
 The man of Hind thus gave the Rája's message :—  
 “ Mayst thou abide so long as heaven endureth !  
 Bid those much travailed in the quest for knowledge  
 To place this board, used in the game of chess,  
 Before them and set all their wits to work  
 To find out how that goodly game is played,  
 To find out what the name is of each piece,  
 The way to move it and its proper square,  
 To find out footman, elephant, and host,  
 Rukh, horse, and how to move wazír and king.  
 If they discover all this goodly game,  
 And prove themselves the betters of the wise,  
 Then, as the Sháh commandeth, I will send  
 Full tribute to his court with all good will ;  
 But if the nobles of the Iránian folk  
 Have not the knowledge to resolve the point,  
 Then, since their knowledge is no match for ours,  
 Let them not seek for tax and tribute hence,  
 But rather pay a tribute unto us,  
 Since knowledge is of all famed things the best.”

Both heart and ear gave Núshírwán to him  
 That on this wise discharged his embassage.  
 They set the board and men before the Sháh,  
 Who looked upon the pieces for a while.  
 Half of the set was made of ivory  
 And bright, the other half of teak. The Sháh,  
 Whose fortune never slumbered, then inquired

C. 1721

About the pieces' shapes and that fair board.  
 The envoy thus replied : “ ‘Tis all, O king !  
 An emblem of the art of war, and thou  
 Wilt see, when thou hast found it out, the tactics,  
 The plan, and order of a battlefield.”

The Sháh said : “ I require a se’nnight’s space :  
 The eighth day we will play right willingly.”

They had a pleasant residence prepared  
 To lodge the ambassador, and then the chiefs  
 And archimages that were counsellors  
 All came before the Sháh and with the chess-board  
 In front of them considered it at large,  
 Examined it, tried every device,  
 And played with one another in all ways.  
 One spake and questioned, and another heard,  
 But none discovered how the game was played,  
 And all departed louring. Búzurjmihr  
 Came to the Sháh, perceived him vexed and  
 troubled,  
 And saw ere he began the task its end.  
 “ O great king,” thus he spake to Núshírwán,  
 “ World-lord and vigilant whose word is law !  
 I will discover all this goodly game,  
 Employing wisdom as my guide therein.”

The Sháh replied : “ Be this affair thy task,  
 And thine moreover health and happiness,  
 Else now the Rája of Kannúj will say :—  
 ‘ The Sháh hath not a single counsellor,’  
 Which were a mighty slur upon the archmages,  
 Court, throne, and men of wisdom.”

Búzurjmihr  
 Then took away with him the board and men,  
 And sat down with his thoughts intent thereon.  
 He tried to play the game in every way,  
 And sought to find the place for every piece.  
 He found the game out in one day and night,

Then hastened from his palace to the Sháh,  
 And said : " O Sháh whose fortune triumpheth !  
 These pieces and this goodly board have I  
 Well studied and I understand it all,  
 Helped by the fortune of the world's great king.  
 'Tis fitting that the king of kings should be  
 The first to see it played. Thou wilt declare :—  
 'It is indeed a battlefield ! ' Then call  
 The Rája's envoy and spectators also."

The king joyed at his words, saluted him  
 As prosperous and fortunate, then bade  
 The archimages, nobles, and famed sages  
 Attend. He called the envoy of the Rája,  
 And seated him before the famous throne.  
 Said Búzurjmíhr, that man of eloquence :—  
 " Priest of the Rája of the sunlike face !  
 What were the words thy monarch said to thee  
 About those pieces ? Wisdom be thy mate."

" The illustrious Rája," he replied, " when I  
 Was quitting him said thus to me : ' Convey  
 These teak and ivory pieces to the throne  
 Of him that is the master of the crown,  
 And say : " Assemble to thee thine archmages  
 And counsellors, and set before them these.  
 If they find how to play this clever game  
 In the approven way, and master it,  
 We will dispatch unto thee purses, slaves,  
 And tribute to the utmost of our powers.  
 The king's worth will arise from knowledge then,  
 Not from his treasures, men, and lofty throne ;  
 But if he and his wise men fail herein,  
 As being dark of counsel, then must he  
 Demand no tribute from us and no treasure.  
 His knowing soul then will regret past toils,  
 Since, realising our shrewd hearts and counsel,  
 He will dispatch still greater wealth to us." ' "

C. 1722

Then Búzurjmihr brought and set up before  
 The throne of him whose fortune never slept  
 The board and men, and said to archimage  
 And chief : “ Ye sages pure of heart and wise !  
 Heed well his words and his shrewd lord’s proposal.”

The sage then fashioned him a battlefield,  
 Whereon he gave the kings the central place,  
 And drew their forces up to left and right,  
 The footmen eager for the fray in front.  
 Beside the king his prudent minister  
 Was posted to advise him in the fight.  
 The warrior-rukhs impetuous on their steeds  
 Were at the wings and fought on right and left.  
 Adjoining these the battle-chargers stood,  
 So that the great king proved the Rája’s match,  
 And then the elephants of war arrayed  
 On either side both eager for the fight.  
 When Búzurjmihr had thus disposed the host  
 The whole assembly stood amazed thereat,  
 The ambassador of Hind was sorely vexed,  
 And marvelled at that man of sleepless fortune,  
 He marvelled at that warlock of a man,  
 And thus his musings ran while plunged in thought :—  
 “ He never saw the board and game of chess,  
 Or heard about it from the adepts of Hind !  
 How hath he learned the fashion of the game ?  
 None else could take his office.”

## Núshírwán

So treated Búzurjmihr that thou hadst said  
 That fortune had unveiled its face before him.  
 The king thereafter gave commands to fill  
 A cup with royal gems. This and a purse,  
 Dínárs and steed with saddle on, gave he  
 To Búzurjmihr and praised him mightily.

## § 2

*How Búzurjmíhr invented Nard, and how Núshírwán sent it with a Letter to the Rája of Hind*

The sage, upon returning to his home,  
Arranged a board and compasses before him,  
Selecting first of all a darkened room  
To make his wits more keen, then mused on chess  
And Indian subtlety, and mustering all  
His powers made wisdom wed his ardent heart,  
And meditating thus invented nard.  
He bade to make two dice of ivory  
With dots the colour of teak-wood thereon,  
Arrayed a field of battle as in chess,  
And drew up the opposing hosts for war,  
Arranging them in eight battalions,  
All ready for pitch-battles or for sieges.  
The ground was dark, the battlefield foursquare,  
Two noble, clement kings were in command,  
Who had a common movement on the field,  
But neither sought the other's injury.  
The troops arrayed beneath their leadership  
For battle on both sides were keen for fight.  
If two friends catch an unsupported foe,  
The twain inflict defeat upon the one.  
He made the two kings move about the field  
In pomp surrounded by their several hosts,  
Each wheeling round about upon the other,  
And combating by turns on hill and plain.  
On this wise till one side was overthrown  
The armies of both monarchs kept the field.  
'Twas thus that Búzurjmíhr, as I have said,  
Invented nard, then went and told the Sháh  
How from the moves of those imperious kings  
Came praise or blame, what powers the pieces had,

C. 1723

And how the armies fought ; these he set forth,  
 And showed in detail to the Sháh whose heart  
 Was all astound ; he needed all his wits,  
 And said : “ O man of ardent soul ! mayst thou,  
 And may thy fortune, still continue young.”

He bade the keeper of the camels bring  
 Two thousand to him and then loaded them  
 With contributions raised from Rúm and Chín,  
 The Haitálians, from Makrán, and from Írán,  
 And from the treasury of the king of kings.  
 The caravan departed from the court.  
 Whenas the camel-loads were all arranged,  
 And that concern was off the monarch’s heart,  
 He called the Rája’s envoy unto him,  
 And of his knowledge uttered many words.

C. 1724

He wrote a letter to the Rája full  
 Of learning, pleasantry, good sense, and counsel,  
 And in the first place gave great praise to God,  
 Who was his refuge from the lusty Dív,  
 Then “ Rája, high renowned, of Hind,” he said,  
 “ Down from the river of Kannúj<sup>1</sup> to Sind !  
 Thy wise ambassador hath come to us  
 With parasols, with elephants, and escort,  
 With tribute and with chess, and I have heard  
 The Rája’s embassage. The task is done.  
 We asked the Indian sage for time, we decked  
 Our soul with knowledge, and an archimage,  
 A very prudent sage of holy rede,  
 Hath sought and found out how the game is played.  
 Now that wise archimage hath come before  
 The exalted Rája at Kannúj and brought  
 Two thousand heavy camel-loads of things<sup>2</sup>  
 Acceptable—a keepsake for thyself—  
 And we have substituted nard for chess.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 112, note.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

What man now will adventure on this game ?  
 There must be many a Brahman well advised,  
 Who by his learning can discover it.  
 The Rája may consign to treasury  
 The riches that have been the envoy's care,  
 But if the Rája and his counsellors  
 Shall try to find out nard, and fail therein,  
 He must according to our covenant  
 Load up as many camels as we sent,  
 And send them back with ours and all their loads ;  
 Such is our pact and bargain."

Búzurjmihr,

What time the sun was radiant in the sky,  
 Departed from the portal of the Sháh  
 With baggage,<sup>1</sup> letter, and the game of nard,  
 His heart absorbed by thoughts of his campaign.  
 On coming to the Rája from Frán,  
 The Brahman acting willingly as guide,  
 He went before the Rája's throne, beheld  
 His head, his fortunes, and his diadem,  
 Praised him no little in the olden tongue,  
 Then gave the royal letter, and repeated  
 The verbal message of the king of kings.  
 The Indian Rája's face bloomed like a rose.  
 The message spake of chess, the Rája's pains,  
 His tribute, how the game of chess had fared,  
 The play, the pieces, and the king's right moves,  
 And those moreover of his counsellors.  
 It told withal the achievement of the sage,  
 Who had invented nard in rivalry,  
 And ended thus : " Now let the Rája read  
 The letter, act, and swerve not from the right."

The Rája's face grew pallid at the words,  
 On hearing that account of chess and nard.  
 There came a great official and assigned

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

C. 1725

A fitting lodging to the ambassador.  
 They had a jocund residence prepared,  
 And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.  
 The Rája asked a space of seven days,  
 And all the Lights of learning came to him.  
 He gathered all the elders of the realm,  
 And laid the game of nard before them there.  
 For one whole se'nnight all the shrewdest men  
 Among the nobles, whether old or young,  
 Sought to discover out of emulation,  
 For fame and triumph, how the game was played ;  
 But to the Rája at the sc'nnight's end  
 A sage said : "No one can make aught thereof,  
 And wisdom must be wedded to his soul,  
 Who from these pieces can invent a game."

The Rája's heart was troubled at those sages,  
 His soul was sorrowful, his brow contracted.  
 Upon the ninth day Búzurjmihr arrived,  
 With eager heart and furrowed face, and said :—  
 "The Sháh accorded me no tarriance here,  
 And he must not be straitened in his heart."

The learnéd magnates went aside and owned  
 Their ignorance, while Búzurjmihr, on hearing,  
 Sat down, and all the sages gave good heed  
 While he set out the board of nard before them,  
 And told the movements of the various pieces,  
 Displayed the leader and his warlike troops,  
 The king's power and the order of the fight.  
 The Rája and his counsellors were all  
 Astound, the company in wonderment,  
 At Búzurjmihr, the chiefs all lauded him,  
 And hailed him as a holy sage. The Rája  
 Interrogated him upon all lore,  
 And he in each case gave a fit response.  
 Then from the sages, from the searchers out  
 Of knowledge, and the scholars rose a cry :—

"Behold an eloquent and learnéd man,  
Not merely skilled in games like chess and nard!"

The Rája had two thousand camels brought,  
And laid on them the tribute of Kannúj,  
Gold, camphor, ambergris, and aloe-wood,  
As well as raiment, silver, pearls, and gems,  
With one year's tribute, and dispatched it all  
From his court to the portal of the Sháh.  
The Rája had a coronet and robe,  
That reached from head to foot, of his own wear  
Brought from his treasury and then bestowed them  
On Búzurjmíhr, gave him much praise withal,  
And to his retinue abundant gifts.  
So from Kannúj departed Búzurjmíhr  
With head exalted to the turning sky,  
With those two thousand camels brought by him,  
And all the gifts and tribute in his charge.  
No one had looked on such a caravan  
Before, and never had been greater wealth.  
He joyed at heart as bearing from the king  
Of Hind a script in Indian characters  
On silk : "The Rája and his mighty men  
Attest for good will, not for fear, that none  
Hath looked on any like Sháh Núshírwán,  
Or ever heard of one such from the priests,  
Or met one wiser than his minister,  
The treasurer of whose knowledge is the sky.  
The tribute for the year was sent before,  
And more shall be if thou demandest it,  
While in the matter of the games the stakes  
Have been sent likewise as agreed upon."

Now when the Sháh gat tidings of his sage :—  
"He hath arrived well satisfied and glad,"  
He was rejoiced at that intelligence,  
And bade the chiefs of city and of host,  
With elephants and kettledrums and tymbals,

C. 1726

To sally forth to welcome Búzurjmihr.  
 That honoured sage's entry of the city  
 Resembled that of some great conquering king,  
 And when that man of lore approached the throne,  
 And proffered praise exceedingly, the Sháh,  
 Lord of the world, embraced him and inquired  
 About the Rája and the weary way,  
 While Búzurjmihr told his experiences,  
 His sleepless fortune and the love of heaven,  
 Then brought the conquering Rája's letter forth,  
 And laid it down before the throne. The Sháh  
 Then gave command for Yazdagird, the scribe,  
 To come before the knowledge-seeking king,  
 And when he read the Rája's letter all  
 The company were in astonishment  
 Both at the wit and rede of Búzurjmihr,  
 And at the fortune of his sun-faced Sháh,  
 Who spake on this wise, saying : " God be praised  
 That I have such a wise and holy sage.  
 The great are servants of my crown and throne,  
 And love of me hath filled their hearts and minds."

Thanks to the Lord of sun and moon, for He  
 Bestoweth victory and mastery,  
 That which I next shall utter will appear  
 A tale more strange than that of Búzurjmihr,  
 Whom heaven with such intelligence did bless :  
 I tell the legend of Talhand and chess.

### § 3

*The Story of Gav and Talhand, and the Invention of Chess*<sup>1</sup>

Thus spake Sháhwí, the ancient sage, so be  
 Attentive to the tale of old Sháhwí :—  
 Once on a time there lived a king in Hind,

<sup>1</sup> This heading is taken from P.

One puissant in treasure, troops, and arms,  
 And everywhere renowned, Jamhúr by name,  
 And passing Fúr himself in fame for valour.  
 Such was this king, of such an ardent spirit,  
 So vigilant and prudent, that from Bust  
 And from Kashmír down to the march of Chín  
 The chieftains homaged him, and all the world  
 Was in his grasp, so mighty was his prowess.  
 He had his dwelling-place at Sandalí ;  
 Here was his throne, his treasures, and his troops,  
 Here were his signet-ring and here his crown.  
 Jamhúr was worshipful, a man of lore,  
 Pre-eminent in knowledge and distinction,  
 And all his lieges, whether of his court  
 Or of his city, joyed alike in him.  
 He had a worthy wife, a prudent dame,  
 Accomplished, learned, and one that injured none.  
 One night a son was born to him just like  
 His sire, who when he saw the youthful prince  
 Bade call him Gav, but soon and suddenly  
 The monarch sickened, told the queen his will,  
 And died bequeathing unto Gav a world,  
 Where justice ruled, though yet he was unfit,  
 By reason of his infancy, for throne,  
 For crown and girdle. All the chieftains' heads  
 Were full of dust, their hearts were sorrowful  
 By reason of Jamhúr, and all the world  
 Still kept in mind the memory of his bounty,  
 His feasts, and justice. Troops and citizens—  
 Men, women, children—met and thus took counsel :—  
 “ This little infant wotteth not of host,  
 Of justice, rigour, throne, and crown. The sway  
 Will suffer if the ruler be not great.”

The monarch had a brother who was wise,  
 And fitted for the throne : his name was Mái.  
 The dwelling-place of that idolater

C. 1727

Was at Dambar, and all the veteran chiefs,  
 In looking for a king, turned to Dambar  
 Their face from Sandalí, while of Kashmír  
 The potentates up to the march of Chín  
 Did homage to him as their sovereign.  
 The exalted Mái came from Dambar and set  
 His feet upon the throne of majesty,  
 Placed on his head the crown worn by Jamhúr,  
 And ruled with justice and with bounteousness.  
 He took to wife Gav's mother, cherished her,  
 And held her all as dear as his own life.  
 The fay-faced dame became with child by Mái,  
 And that illustrious lady bare a son,  
 Whom Mái, that mighty monarch, named Talhand,  
 And loved with all his soul. Now when the babe  
 Was two years old and Gav was seven, and grown  
 A lusty warrior dowered with Grace and stature,  
 Mái ailed, his glad heart was espoused to care.  
 He languished for two se'nnights' space, then died,  
 And passing left the world to other's hands.

C. 1728 All Sandalí was sorrowful and wept,  
 And burned with pain of heart because of him.  
 They spent a month in mourning for the king,  
 And at the end thereof the whole host met,  
 The great men and the warriors of the state—  
 All that had part in wisdom. Much talk passed  
 In that assembly on all points. At length  
 A wise man thus addressed the counsellors :—  
 “ This lady, who was once spouse to Jamhúr,  
 Hath kept herself at all times from ill-doing,  
 In both her marriages hath sought the right,  
 And followed after justice all her days.  
 The lady is of noble lineage,  
 Just, upright, and inspireth confidence.  
 ‘Tis best that she should be our queen, for she  
 Remaineth—the memorial of two kings.”

The assembly all assented thereunto,  
 And then the sage addressed the wise queen thus :—  
 “ Take thou the throne of thy two sons, for this  
 Will make for greatness, and there is no choice.  
 When they grow worthy of the throne resign  
 To them the majesty, the wealth, and host,  
 And be from that time forth their counsellor,  
 Companion, minister, and best of friends.”

The lady—fortune’s favourite—at these words  
 Gave lustre to the crown and graced the throne,  
 Grew kinder, more considerate, and just,  
 And all the realm rejoiced in her. She chose  
 Two men wise, holy, travelled, and accomplished,  
 And to their charge entrusted both her sons—  
 Those princes of high lineage and wise.  
 Withal she never left them for a day,  
 And found her happiness in seeing them.  
 Now as they grew in lustiness and lore,  
 Becoming mighty men in that regard,  
 One or the other used to come alone  
 To his good mother, ever and anon,  
 And ask : “ Which is the fittest of us twain,  
 Most high of heart, most likely, and most shrewd ? ”

And thus the mother would reply to both :—  
 “ That I may know which is more excellent,  
 Show prowess, counsel, self-control, and Faith,  
 Fair speech, and an ambition to be praised ;  
 For wisdom, modesty, self-governance,  
 And justice, are required since ye are both  
 Of royal birth.”

When one of them would come  
 Alone at whiles before her and inquire :—  
 “ Which of us twain will have the sovereignty,  
 Which of us have the treasure, throne, and crown ? ”  
 Then would she answer him : “ The throne is thine,  
 For wisdom, counsel, fortune, are thine own.”

C. 1729

She said the same thing to the other also  
 Until the saying grew inveterate,  
 And thus she made the heart of each expectant  
 Of throne, wealth, host, fame, fortune. They attained,  
 Each with a baleful tutor for his guide,  
 To man's estate, and through their mutual envy  
 Both suffered, both were hot for crown and treasure,  
 The whole realm and the host were rent in twain,  
 While good men's hearts grew fearful. Both the sons,  
 Impassioned by their baleful tutors' talk,  
 Came to their mother, crying : " Which of us  
 Is best and meekest under good and ill ? "

That prudent lady made them this reply :—  
 " First it is needful for you both to sit  
 In counsel with the sages pure of heart,  
 And solve this question in content and peace,  
 And after do ye and your tutors ask  
 The great men most renowned throughout the state,  
 All those possessed of counsel as their portion,  
 As to your right procedure in this case.  
 Whoever seeketh crown and throne hath need  
 Of wisdom, treasure, counsel, and a host,  
 For when a tyrant hath the sovereignty  
 He filleth all the world with heat and ruin."

Shrewd Gav made answer to his mother thus :—  
 " Seek not to parry so my questioning.  
 If I am not the lustre of this realm,  
 Say so, but say not aught that is untrue.  
 Deliver to Talhand the throne and crown,  
 And I will be a loyal liege to him,  
 While if as older, wiser, and by birth  
 Sprung from Jamhûr, I am to be the king,  
 Forbid him in his folly to attempt  
 Strong measures for the sake of crown and throne."

His mother answered : " Act not hastily :  
 Thou shouldst push not these matters to extremes.

Whoever sitteth on the throne must have  
 His two hands open and his girdle girt,  
 Must keep his pure soul guarded too from evil,  
 And walk with knowledge in the sage's way,  
 Must too be wary of the foe in fight,  
 And heed what maketh for his reputation.  
 The Master of the sun and moon will judge  
 His acts just and unjust to state and host,  
 And if the king oppresseth but a gnat  
 His spirit will be left to mourn in Hell.  
 The world is more obscure than night itself,  
 And hearts must be more subtle than a hair  
 To keep the soul and body<sup>1</sup> free from evil,  
 And recognise that guile will profit not.  
 When one is crowned and sitteth on the throne  
 Of justice all the world will joy thereat,  
 Yet is his end a couch of brick and dust,  
 Or else cremation in the funeral pit.  
 Of such a stock as this Jamhúr was sprung,  
 Whose counsels were remote from deeds of ill.  
 He died before his natural time to die,  
 And left his younger brother as the heir  
 To all his world. Great Mái came from Dambar,  
 Still young, shrewd-hearted, and a counsellor.  
 All Sandalf went out to welcome him  
 With full hearts and all eager for a king.  
 He came and sat upon the throne of power  
 With girdle girded and with open hands.  
 He sought me as his spouse, and we were wedded  
 That so state-secrets might be seercts still.  
 Now since thou art the elder of the twain,  
 The elder both in wisdom and in years,  
 Strive not to vex thy spirit for the sake  
 Of eminence, of treasure, and of crown.  
 If I choose one of you the other one  
 Will be fulfilled with pain and with revenge

C. 1730

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

At me. Shed no blood for the sake of crown  
And treasure, for this Wayside Hostelry  
Abideth not with any."

When Talhand

Had heard his mother's words he liked them not,  
And thus replied : " Thy sentence is for Gav,  
Because he is the elder, but although  
My brother is mine elder as to years  
Still every elder is not better too.  
Within this host and realm is many a man  
As ancient as the vultures of the sky,  
And yet such never sought for place or host,  
Or diadem or treasure, throne or crown.  
My father died when young and did not give  
The throne of majesty to any. I see  
Thy heart in foolishness disposed toward Gav,  
And that thou wilt give him the preference,  
Though I could make as good as him from clay !  
God grant that ne'er I shame my father's name."

His mother sware a solemn oath and said :—  
" May I forgo the azure vault of heaven  
If ever I desired of God to make  
Gav king or ever set my heart thereon.  
Think with all charity concerning this,  
And rail not at the process of the sky,  
Because it doeth good to whom it will :  
So look to God alone and trust none other.  
I have advised you to the best I could,  
But if my counsel be of no avail  
Consider what is better and that do :  
Strive and make that the provand of your lives."

The queen thereafter summoned all the wise,  
And laid before them all that she proposed.  
She brought the keys that oped the treasury  
Belonging to those two kings wise and good,  
Displayed the wealth therein reposed

Before those men of much experience,  
 Gave both her sons an equal share and sought  
 To satisfy the claims of both of them.  
 Thereafter Gav spake to Talhand and said :—  
 “ Thou, good of heart but bent on novel schemes !  
 Jamhúr, as thou hast heard, was greater far  
 Than Mái, alike in counsel and in years.  
 Thy sire, that virtuous and noble man,  
 Showed not the least ambition for the crown.  
 It was no shame to him to be a subject :  
 He sought no kind of lordship o'er the lords.  
 Mark if the just Judge will approve that I  
 Shall gird myself before my younger brother.  
 Our mother spake but justice, wherefore then  
 Should thy heart joy in that which is not just ?  
 Now summon we the leaders of the host,  
 Wise men and well acquainted with the world,  
 And having listened to the sages' words,  
 Assent to their decision and advice ;  
 We shall learn knowledge from them and illume  
 Our hearts with understanding.”

C. 1731

Those two sages—

Men of good counsel—met and much talk passed.  
 Gav's sage required that Gav should be the king  
 In Sandalí and take the foremost place ;  
 The other, who was tutor to Talhand,  
 And wisest of the wise, spoke up for him ;  
 They wrangled till the princes were at odds.  
 Within one hall two thrones were set whereon  
 Those princes of victorious fortune sat,  
 Each with his lusty sage upon his right,  
 And covetous of his inheritance.  
 They summoned all the nobles to the hall,  
 And seated them to right hand and to left.  
 Then those two sages loosed their tongues and said :—  
 “ O ye illustrious and famous men !

Of these two chiefs of glorious lineage,  
 Who keep the customs of their sires in mind,  
 Which will ye have as ruler over you ?  
 Which youth do ye esteem the holier ? ”

The priests, the nobles, and the wise men shrewd  
 Of heart, were lost in wonderment thereat.  
 The two young princes sat, each on his throne,  
 While those ill-omened sages both harangued,  
 And citizen and soldier knew full well  
 That only war and strife could come of it,  
 That all the empire would be rent asunder,  
 The wise man left in travail and dismay.  
 Then from the company one raised his head,  
 Rose to his feet, and said : “ How dare we speak  
 What profiteth before two famous kings ?  
 Assemble we to-morrow and discuss  
 The case among ourselves without reserve,  
 And then announce our sentence to them both :  
 It may be that they both will be content.”

They left the hall with murmurs and in dudgeon,  
 Sighs on their lips and sorrow in their souls,  
 And said : “ This business hath grown troublesome  
 Beyond the handling of experienced men.  
 We never saw two kings confronted thus,  
 With two bad ministers upon the dais.”

C. 1732      All night their faces had a careworn look,  
 And when the sun arose above the mountains  
 The great men of the state, the wise, assembled,  
 On all sides Sandalí was filled with clamour,  
 And every man spake that which liked him best.  
 One warrior was the partisan of Gav,  
 Another for Talhand was advocate.  
 Tongues tired of talking, there was no accord.  
 At length that great assembly was dissolved,  
 And citizens and soldiers went their ways,  
 One to give in adherence to Talhand,

And utter malisons on Gav, another  
 To go to Gav with mace and sword, and cry :—  
 “ I will begrudge not life to serve the king.”  
 Confusion filled the realm of Sandalí  
 Through honest partisanship. Saith the sage :—  
 “ When two command within one house ’twill fall.”  
 Then tidings came to Gav and to Talhand :—  
 “ Each quarter hath a leader of its own,  
 Who layeth waste the city at his will :  
 The princes must not suffer it.”

## The news

Filled both of them with fear, and they kept watch  
 Both night and day, and thus it came to pass,  
 One day, that both young princes chanced to meet  
 Without their paladins or any escort.  
 They set their tongues loose, each against the other,  
 Frowns on their brows and warlike thoughts within.  
 The noble Gav was full of lamentation,  
 The tidings moved him deeply, and he said  
 Thus to Talhand : “ My brother ! act not thus,  
 Because for us the thing hath passed all bounds,  
 But be content and follow not mad schemes,  
 For they have no allurement for the wise.  
 As thou hast heard, Mái, while Jamhúr still lived,  
 Was as a slave before him. When he died,  
 And left me still a miserable babe,  
 They could give not the throne to one so young.  
 The world had grown so just beneath his rule  
 That no one dared to seek to fill his place.  
 His brother was as body is to soul  
 To him, and all wished Mái to be their king.  
 If then I had been fitted for the throne  
 None ever would have looked at him. Let us  
 Ensue the precedents of kings of yore,  
 And hear the wise on points of right and wrong.  
 I am thy better both by years and father.

Thou sayest : ‘ I am both the chief and better.’  
 But say not so. Seek not unworthily  
 The throne of kingship, or fulfil the realm  
 With strife.”

Talhand thus answered him : “ Enough !  
 None ever compassed power by subtleties.  
 This crown and throne received I from my sire,  
 Received it as the seed that he had sown,  
 C. 1733 And henceforth I will guard the sovereignty,  
 The host, and treasure, with the scimitar.  
 Prate not to me of Máí and of Jamhúr :  
 If thou wilt have the throne then fight for it.”

They turned away with heads fulfilled with strife,  
 And went within the city to prepare.  
 The soldiers and the citizens all keen  
 For war betook them to the princes’ courts.  
 One faction was in favour of Talhand,  
 The other favoured Gav. The battle-cry  
 Rose at the princes’ doors. No standing-room  
 Was left within the city for the throng.  
 Talhand was first to arm him for the fight,  
 Because his courage would brook no delay.  
 He oped the portal of his father’s hoards,  
 And served out helm and mail to all his troops.  
 The state was rent asunder, and the wise  
 Were full of fear at heart, and thus they said :—  
 “ What is the end that heaven purposeth,  
 And which of these young men will lose his life ? ”

News of both kings was bruited through the  
 realm,  
 And from all sides hosts gathered troop on troop.  
 Talhand was first to put his armour on,  
 And bathe his hands in blood. Gav also donned  
 His coat of mail and helmet, and invoked  
 The spirit of his sire. Embittered thus  
 They both took action, housed the elephants,

And saddled them. Thou wouldest have said : "The earth —

Is eager for the combat." All the city  
 Was filled with din of gong and Indian bells,  
 All ears were charged with blare of clarions.  
 These two young kings departed to their camps,  
 And every one took his own life in hand.  
 That battlefield filled heaven with amaze,  
 And eyes were darkened by the dust of hosts.  
 The flourish of the trumpets and the clash  
 Of brazen cymbals went up from both lines.  
 The wings were drawn up to the right and left,  
 And thou hadst said : "Earth is all mountain-like."  
 The armies' fronts extended o'er two miles.  
 Those two great kings rode each his elephant.  
 Their standards waved above their heads. One bore  
 A tiger, one an eagle, as device.  
 The footmen were in front equipped with spears  
 And bucklers, and all ready for the fight.  
 Gav looked upon the field and saw the air  
 Streaked like the markings on a savage pard.  
 Each throat<sup>1</sup> was full of dust, the plain all blood,  
 And midst the dust the lances led the way.  
 Gav, though Talhand had angered him, and wisdom  
 Had stitched not up the lips of his ambition,  
 Yet chose him out a man of fluent speech—  
 The chiefest of his nobles—and thus said :—  
 " Go to Talhand and say to him : ' Ensue not  
 War with thy brother in this unjust fashion,  
 Since thou wilt suffer in the other world  
 For all the blood shed in this strife of ours.  
 Give ear to Gav's advice and err not thou  
 Through what an evil counsellor may say.  
 In this conjuncture ne'er must this reproach  
 Remain as our<sup>2</sup> memorial—that this realm

C. 1734

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P. —<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

Of Hind is desolate, the lurking-place  
 Of lions and of pards. Forbear this war  
 And strife, and wantonly to shed this blood  
 Unjustly. Joy my heart with peace and save  
 Our necks by making use of wisdom's net.  
 Stretch out thy rod from this march unto Chín,  
 And let whate'er thou wilt of earth be thine.  
 I will esteem thy love as mine own soul,  
 And set thee as a crown upon my head.  
 Share we the kingship as we shared the wealth ;  
 Throne and tiara are not worth such pains ;  
 But if thus wholly thou art bent on strife,  
 Injustice, and the scattering of the flock,  
 Now gathered, in this world thou wilt be blamed,  
 And judged in that to come. Incline not, brother !  
 To wrong ; it cannot stand against the right.'"

Now when the envoy came before Talhand,  
 Came with the prudent embassage of Gav,  
 Talhand returned this answer : " Say to him :—  
 ' Employ not so much subterfuge in warfare.  
 I call thee neither brother nor a friend ;  
 Thou art not, brain or skin, akin to me,  
 And wilt but make the empire desolate  
 By thus assailing these my gallant troops.  
 The knaves are with thee and are thine Urmuzd  
 Upon Bahrám's day.<sup>1</sup> Thou art guilty too  
 In God's sight as ill-famed, misgot, and curst.  
 For all blood shed by thee in fight henceforth  
 The curses will be thine, the blessings mine.  
 Thou said'st moreover : " Let us share the realm,  
 The land, the worship, and the ivory throne,"  
 But treasure, power, and kingship all are mine,  
 Mine from the sun down to the Fish's back.<sup>2</sup>  
 As long as thou dost play the king, dost share

<sup>1</sup> i.e. thy leaders on the day of action. Cf. Vol. iii. p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. i. p. 71.

The land with me, and wouldest be my mate,  
 I wish my body and my soul may part  
 Or ever I shall look on throne and crown.  
 My host have I arrayed, and even now  
 The air is like brocade all shot with gold ;  
 So many are the arrows, darts, and spearheads  
 That none can tell his stirrups from his reins.  
 Heads will I scatter on the battlefield,  
 Will bring a wail of woe from all Gav's troops,  
 And in such fashion lead my host to fight  
 That I will sate with war that Warrior-pard.  
 I will lead Gav himself with bounden hands,  
 His troops shall see the dust of overthrow,  
 Their leaders shall be lifeless by my sword,  
 Their wounded men shall writhe in misery,  
 For none of them from bondslaves up to prince  
 Shall don again his breastplate for the fight.”

C. 1735

The prudent envoy having heard his answer,  
 Returned and gave it word for word. Gav's heart  
 Was sad at hearing it because he saw  
 No knowledge in Talhand, and full of care  
 Called his own sage, discoursed of the response  
 At large, and said : “ Suggest a remedy,  
 Thou seeker after wisdom ! for this case.  
 The desert is all blood and trunkless heads,  
 And souls pass to the Judge of all the world.  
 This battle must not bring, when all is done,  
 Ill fortune on us.”

Said the sage : “ O king !  
 Thou needest not a teacher to teach thee,  
 But if thou wilt have mine advice herein. . . .  
 In fighting with thy brother be not fierce,  
 And send him yet another messenger,  
 A man of high rank, learned, and eloquent,  
 To give yet one more message. He still may  
 Abate hostility. Resign to him

The treasures gathered by the toil of others,  
 Preferring thereunto thy brother's life.  
 Since both the crown and signet-ring are thine  
 Forbear to wrangle with him as to pelf,  
 For I have seen from heaven's processes  
 That his time endeth shortly, and that none  
 Of all the seven planets favoureth him.  
 Moreover he will perish on this field  
 Of strife. Thou hast no need to press him. Give him  
 Whatever he shall ask of steeds and wealth,  
 So that thou mayst repent not at his death,  
 The royal signet, crown, and throne excepted,  
 For fear the troops may call thee faint of heart ;  
 But thou if king and fortune's favourite  
 Art versed yet more in heaven's purposes."

The prince, when he had heard his tutor's words,  
 Made yet a new endeavour. With wet face,  
 Through anguish for his brother's sake, he chose  
 One favoured by the stars and eloquent,  
 And said to him : " Go to Talhand and say :—  
 ' Gav is fulfilled with trouble and with pain  
 As touching heaven's purpose and this fight,  
 And prayeth that the almighty Judge of all  
 Will stir up love and prudence in thy heart,  
 So that thou mayest yet renounce this strife  
 Against thy brother. If 'tis through thy sage,  
 Who haunteth thee, deceiving thy dark soul,  
 That thou art grown so fierce and quarrelsome  
 Still thou canst not escape the course of heaven.  
 Ask the twelve signs and seven planets how  
 This unjust work will fare. Foes compass us,  
 And all the world is full of wicked men ;  
 Moreover by the monarch of Kashmír,  
 And by Faghfúr of Chín, who even now  
 Are pressing on our realm, we shall be flouted  
 On two sides, and by other warrior-chiefs.

How they will say : “ Why are Talhand and Gav  
 Contending for the sake of throne and crown ?  
 Are they not then of common stock by birth,  
 Not each the offspring of a holy sire ?  
 And yet when counsellors of evil heart  
 So prompt them they must put their hands to blood ! ”  
 If thou wilt leave thy host and visit me,  
 And so illumine this darkened soul of mine,  
 I will bestow on thee dínars, brocade,  
 Steeds, treasure ; I would have thee all untroubled.  
 Thou shalt have also jewels, province, signet,  
 And crown, with armlets and an ivory throne.  
 These from an elder brother are no shame,  
 And I desire not battle, but if thou  
 Wilt hearken not my rede thou wilt repent  
 At last.”

The envoy, speeding torrent-like,  
 Came to Talhand, the dark of soul, and told  
 What Gav had said to him and added more  
 Concerning kingship, wealth, dínárs, and goods.  
 Whenas Talhand had heard the envoy’s speech,  
 His wisdom, and his prudent policy,  
 He would assent not to his brother’s words,  
 Because the heaven purposed otherwise,  
 But made this answer, saying : “ Say to Gav :—  
 ‘ Be thou a schemer still, and may thy tongue  
 Be severed by the scimitar of ill,  
 Thy body burnt up in the Magians’ fire !  
 Thy crude proposals have I heard and see  
 That all thy stock-in-trade is subterfuge.  
 How wilt thou give to me the royal treasure,  
 For who art thou amongst this mighty people ?  
 Good sooth ! thy life must be nigh o’er since thou  
 Displayest such prolonged anxiety !  
 The armies’ ranks extend two miles, the world  
 Is full of men, of steeds, and elephants.

March forth and set the battle in array :  
 Thou camest forth to fight ; why dally then ?  
 Thou'lt see such prowess from me that the stars  
 Will have to tell the total of thy days.  
 Thou knowest naught but practice, craft, and lies,  
 Perceiving that thy downfall is at hand.  
 Thou art afar from counsel, crown, and throne,  
 And no wise man will call thee fortunate.'"

The envoy came charged with these blustering words,

And told the prince's answer. Thus, until  
 Dark night displayed its face, the envoy fared  
 Between the twain who, camping on the field,  
 Dug out a trench before their several hosts.

C. 1737 The outposts went their rounds. Thus passed the night.

Now when Sol rose in Leo, making earth  
 As 'twere a sea of splendour, and, all golden,  
 Enrobed the dome of lapis-lazuli,  
 From both the camp-enclosures rose the blare  
 Of clarions and the roar of kettledrums,  
 The flags of both young princes were displayed,  
 And both the hosts deployed to right and left,  
 While at their centres those exalted princes  
 Were stationed, each with his sage minister.  
 Gav bade his to proclaim thus to the chiefs :—  
 “ Raise ye your standards, every man of you !  
 Let every one draw forth his blue steel sword,  
 But not a warrior advance a step,  
 Or any of the foot-men quit his post,  
 For none is sober, wise, and well advised,  
 That is impetuous on the day of battle :  
 I would take note of how Talhand deployeth.  
 The counsel of all-holy God alone  
 Prevaileth from bright sun to darksome dust,  
 And I am hopeful that Almighty God

Will grant to us a glorious destiny.  
 Tried have we counsel and in loving fashion  
 Have pleaded, but Talhand is still averse.  
 If now our host shall be victorious,  
 And if the process of the sun and moon  
 Afford us fruit, shed ye not blood for spoil,  
 Because ye shall receive a treasure-hoard ;  
 And if some famous warrior of our host,  
 Who chargeth on their centre, shall perchance  
 Confront Talhand in fight he must not cast  
 The dust upon him. Praying as we go,  
 And with our girdles girt, confront we now  
 Yon mighty elephants."

The soldiers shouted :—

" We will perform thy bidding and will make  
 Thy counsel the adornment of our souls."

Upon the other side Talhand harangued  
 His troops and said : " Ye warders of the throne !  
 That we may be victorious, and the star  
 Of our good fortune bring forth fruit for us,  
 Draw, all of ye, your swords, confide in God,  
 And slay the foe. When ye have ta'en Gav captive  
 Ye must not kill him or address him harshly,  
 But take him from yon raging elephant,  
 And bring him to me with his hands in bonds."

Thereat the blaring of the clarions  
 Rose in the court before the royal tent.  
 At all the neighing of the steeds, the dust  
 Raised by the chiefs, and whirl of massive maces,  
 The hills and streams re-echoed. " Circling heaven  
 Recoileth," thou hadst said. At all the shoutings, C. 1738  
 And crash of axes, " No one," thou hadst said,  
 " Knew head from foot." The sun withdrew its  
 skirt  
 From those bright arrow-heads and eagles' plumes.  
 Earth seemed a sea of blood where heads and hands

Were pebbles in its depths. The royal princes  
 Came from the centre, like huge elephants,  
 And from them both a shout arose : " Avoid  
 The wind of my two-headed javelin.  
 O brother ! be not forward in the fight,  
 And guard thee from my sword."

Thus shouted they,  
 Each to the other, while the earth seemed all  
 A sea of blood, The valiant swordsmen wheeled  
 About the field, and streams of blood and brains  
 Ran from the blows of those two warlike princes.  
 Thus till the sun had left the sky the strife  
 Surpassed all bounds. Then from the field a shout  
 Rose, and the voice of Gav cried : " Combatants,  
 And youthful warriors ! exact not vengeance  
 On those that would have quarter at our hands.  
 Know that my brother shrinketh from the fray,  
 And may abide not, being left unaided."

Then many chiefs asked quarter, many more  
 Were slaughtered on the field, Talhand's whole host  
 Was scattered, and the flock was shepherdless,  
 The shepherd flockless. When Talhand was left  
 Alone upon his elephant, Gav called  
 To him and said : " Go to thy palace, brother !  
 And have regard to that and thine own court.  
 Good sooth ! thou shalt not suffer in thy person  
 From me or at the hands of this famed host  
 Of swordsmen. Know that all good is from God,  
 And give Him thanks so long as life shall last  
 That thou hast left this battlefield alive. . . .  
 But 'tis no time for counsel or delay."

Now when Talhand had heard his brother's words  
 He writhed with shame, his face ran tears, he left  
 The battlefield for Margh. Troops flocked to him  
 From every side. He oped his magazines,  
 And gave supplies. His host was well equipped,

Content, and glad. He gave a robe of honour  
 To each that in his eyes so merited.  
 When all the soldiers had received their pay,  
 And when his warlike heart was freed from dudgeon,  
 He sent to Gav a message : " Thou that art  
 To throne as weed to garden ! thou shalt burn  
 Anon, thy spirit shall be stricken, thine eyes  
 Sewn up. Thou deem'st that I can harm thee not,  
 But girdle not thy heart with self-deceit."

Gav, when he heard that savage message, washed C. 173  
 Affection for his brother from his soul.  
 His heart was filled with dudgeon, and he said  
 Thus to his sage : " Behold this monstrous thing ! "

The sage replied : " O king ! upon the throne  
 Thou art the memory of thy sire, more learned  
 Than seekers after lore, and mightiest  
 Of kings. I told my lord the truth, as vouched  
 By circling sun and shining moon, that till  
 This famous prince be overthrown, and snake-like  
 Writhe on the darksome dust, ne'er will he rest,  
 Or turn away from strife. In this contention  
 Thy policy is to affect delay.

Reply not harshly, seek the way for union  
 And peace with him. All his endeavouring  
 Is to work evil. What is he to do ?  
 It is God's will. If he shall fight again,  
 We too will fight. He is in haste while we  
 Can wait."

King Gav then called the messenger,  
 Held talk with him at large with courteousness,  
 And said to him : " Go to, say to my brother :—  
 ' Be not so brutal and so violent,  
 For violence becometh not a king.  
 Thy sire was noble ; thou art noble likewise.  
 I see this clearly that thou dost reject  
 My counsels and alliance, yet am fain

To have thee fair renowned and well disposed.  
 Now will I show thee all my heart and tell  
 The matter that my mind is purposing.  
 Thine evil minister hath sundered thee  
 From quiet, good advice, and wisdom's way.  
 Speak not but what is just because the world,  
 My brother ! is but mockery and wind.  
 Incline to peace that I may send thee all  
 The wealth in full and loyal lieges also  
 Forthwith, and thy misdoubting soul will see  
 That there is naught but justice in my heart.  
 May every one be joyful in thy life !  
 My purpose is according to my words,  
 If thou, self-willed one ! wilt attend thereto.  
 Howbeit if thou art intent on war,  
 And overtures for peace and pact are vain,  
 I will array my warriors for battle,  
 And they suffice to occupy a realm.  
 Let us go forth beyond these peopled lands,  
 And lead our two hosts onward to the sea.  
 Dig we a trench about them there to shut  
 Our warriors in, then fill it with sea-water,  
 And urge them to the fray, so that the worsted  
 May not escape by reason of the trench,  
 While he of us that is victorious  
 Shall shed not blood upon that straitened spot,  
 But take the foemen captive. God forbid  
 That we should use our scimitars and arrows.' "

C. 1740

The envoy went his way and came like wind.  
 He told Talhand the words of Gav. The prince,  
 When he had listened to that embassage,  
 Bade summon to his presence all the men  
 Of leading in his host and seated them,  
 Each one in due accordance to his rank,  
 Repeated to them Gav's response, disclosed  
 The matter, and thus said : " What are your view

On this new-fangled battle by the sea  
 Proposed by Gav ? How shall we deal therewith,  
 And shall we turn his fancy into fact ?  
 If ye are one with me then not a man  
 Will draw back for a moment from the fight.  
 What matter whether it be sea or mountain  
 When we seek battle in the ranks of war ?  
 If ye will be my comrades in the strife  
 The leopard shall fear not the fox's voice.  
 All those of us that seek for high renown  
 Shall win their chief ambition from the world.  
 The aspirant rather should be slain with fame  
 Than live to grace the triumph of the foe.  
 Whoe'er shall bear him stoutly in the fight,  
 His bearing shall not disadvantage him,  
 For such shall have of me unstinted wealth  
 With servants and with steeds caparisoned.  
 Then from Kashmīr down to the sea of Chīn  
 The folk in every state will homage us ;  
 I will bestow their cities on my troops  
 Or ever kingship, crown, and throne are mine.”

In answer all the chieftains bowed their faces  
 Before him till they touched the ground, and said :—  
 “ Our choice is fame, and thou, who art our king,  
 Shalt see a turn of fortune.”

Then a shout

Rose from the portal of Talhand, and all  
 The province was astir with troops. He led  
 His whole host toward the sea, the troops of Gav  
 Appeared on their side, and the two kings lighted,  
 Confronting, for they each would be avenged  
 Upon the other. Round the hosts they dug  
 A trench and, when 'twas deep, let in the water.  
 Both armies drew up face to face, and foam  
 Was on the horsemen's lips. The wings were ranged  
 To right and left, the baggage was bestowed

Anigh the sea, and those illustrious kings,  
 All dudgeon and vindictiveness, then saddled  
 Two elephants, each at his army's centre  
 Took up his station, and assumed command.  
 The earth grew pitch-like, heaven azure-dim  
 With all the spears and silken bannerets,  
 While air was ebon with the armies' dust.  
 C. 1741 What with the trumpet's blare and tymbal's din  
 Thou wouldest have said : "The sea is all a-boil,  
 The crocodiles therein call out for blood !"  
 While at the thud of battle-ax, of mace,  
 And sword, a red reek went up from the deep,  
 And as that veil was drawn athwart the sun  
 The world's face vanished from the eyes of men.  
 Thou wouldest have said : "The air is raining  
 swords,  
 And planting tulips in the dust !" The world  
 Was heaped so with the fallen that the vulture  
 Durst fly not overhead. Some lay within  
 The trench, which ran with blood, while other some  
 Were flung down headless on the field. The sea  
 Rose with the wind, and still the hosts advanced,  
 Troop after troop, while all the plain was filled  
 With livers, brains, and hearts. The horses' hoofs  
 Were clogged with gory mire. Talhand looked forth  
 Upon his elephant and saw the earth  
 O'erflowing like the Nile ; the wind withal  
 Was in his face, and he had need of meat  
 And drink, but saw no peace and no escape  
 From wind and sun and trenchant scimitar,  
 And, swooning, died upon his golden saddle,  
 Resigning all the realm of Hind to Gav.  
 When loss betideth one, whose eyes are set  
 On gain, how great his passion and regret !  
 And since both gain and loss must pass away  
 Enjoy, old sage ! the pleasures of to-day,

For howsoever much may be thy gains  
 The world's whole treasure is not worth the pains.

Gav looking from the centre failed to spy  
 The prince's flag, so sent a cavalier  
 To wheel before the elephants, and search  
 The foemen's front for miles, to find out whither  
 Had gone the bright red banner that had shadowed  
 The horsemen's faces, "for the fight is stayed  
 Unless mine eyes are blinded by the dust."

The horseman came, looked everywhere but saw  
 not

The standard of the chief, howbeit he saw  
 The foemen's centre all confuséd cries,  
 And all the horsemen looking for their prince.  
 Thereat he turned away, came quick as dust,  
 And told the news to Gav. That general  
 Alighted from his elephant and went  
 Two miles afoot and weeping bitterly.  
 Whenas he looked upon the dead Talhand,  
 And saw the soldiers' faces woebegone,  
 He keenly scanned the corpse from head to foot,  
 But saw not any wound on breast or skin.  
 Then that exalted monarch wailed aloud,  
 Sat grieved and heavy by the corpse, and said :—  
 "Alack ! thou youthful warrior ! thou hast gone  
 Fulfilled with anguish and with wounded soul,  
 Slain by the process of thine evil star,  
 Else had the cruel blast not smitten thee.  
 Thou didst reject the counsel of thy teachers,  
 Hast gone, and darkened is thy mother's heart.  
 Much did I warn thee in all kindness,  
 But yet my counsel could avail thee naught."

Now when the sage of Gav arrived and saw  
 Talhand, the world-aspirant, dead, his brother  
 Bewailing him on that wide plain with cries  
 That pierced the sky, he likewise wailed and wallowed

C. 1742

Before Gav, saying : “ Woe for thee, young world-lord ! ”

Addressing then his lips to give advice  
 He said to Gav : “ Exalted king ! what profit  
 This grief and mourning ? He hath passed away ;  
 What was to be hath been. Thou mayst thank God  
 In one regard—that thy hand slew him not.  
 I told my lord all that would be as vouched  
 By Mars and Saturn, sun and moon : ‘ This youth  
 Will bear him so in fight that he will end  
 His days,’ and now his work is as the wind,  
 And he hath gone through ignorance and haste,  
 While all this mighty host is full of grief  
 And anger, and all eyes are fixed on thee.  
 Content thyself, make us contented too,  
 And thus contenting do what wisdom would ;  
 For when the soldiers shall behold their king  
 Afoot and weeping on the way for grief,  
 His lustre will be minished in their eyes,  
 And e’en the basest will wax insolent  
 Toward him, for the king is like a cup  
 Filled with rose-water : may the blast not strike him ! ”

Gav hearkened to that prudent sage’s rede.  
 A proclamation went forth from the host :—  
 “ Ye men of name and warriors of the king !  
 Let no one tarry on the battlefield,  
 For yon host is disjoined not now from this ;  
 Both must be one in act and in acclaim.  
 Be all ’neath my protection and preserve  
 For me the memory of my high-souled brother.”

Then called he all the chiefs, on his eyelashes  
 Let fall his own heart’s blood, made for Talhand  
 A narrow coffin out of ivory  
 And gold, of turquoise and teak-wood, and swathed  
 His brother’s face with glossy silk of Chín.  
 Thus passed away that famous chief of Hind.

They sealed the coffin-lid with gums and pitch,  
With musk and camphor. Then Gav marched away  
In haste and tarried at no stage for long.

The princes' mother slept not, rested not,  
And fasted after they had chosen their field  
Of battle. Ever on the road she kept  
A watch and passed each day in bitterness.

So when the host's dust went up from the road  
The wakeful watchman saw it from the look-out,  
And thence too saw the flag of Gav appear,  
While all the realm's face was o'erspread with troops.

He gazed from two miles off in hope to see  
The elephant and standard of Talhand,  
But failed to recognise them mid the host.  
He hurried off a horseman from the look-out  
To say : "The army cometh from the mountains,  
And Gav is there with all his company,  
But I see not Talhand, his elephant,  
Or flag, or yet his chiefs with golden boots."

His mother poured down blood, which drenched her  
breast,  
From her eyelashes. When news came : "That Light  
Of empire is bedimmed, the atheling,  
Talhand, hath died on saddle-back and left  
To Gav his seat upon the throne of kingship,"  
She hurried to the palace of Talhand,  
And oftentimes dashed her head against its walls.  
She rent her raiment, tore her cheeks, flung fire  
On hall and treasury, and burnt up all  
The palace and the throne of majesty.  
Thereafter she upreared a mighty pyre  
To burn herself, as is the use of Hind,  
And by her sorrow illustrate its Faith.

When tidings of his mother came to Gav  
He urged his speedy charger on and came,  
Embraced her closely, and entreated her,

C. 1743

With blood upon his eyelids, saying thus :—  
 “ O loving mother ! hearken to my words,  
 Because we have transgressed not in this fight.  
 It was not I or my companions,  
 Or warrior of this noble host, that slew him.  
 None durst breathe harshly on him : he was slain  
 Beneath the process of his evil star.”

His mother answered him : “ Thou wicked man !  
 On thee will come high heaven’s malison ;  
 Thy brother hast thou slain for crown and throne,  
 And no good man will call thee fortunate.”

“ O loving mother ! ” thus he answered her,  
 “ Thou oughtest not to think such ill of me,  
 But be content and I will tell thee all  
 The case of king and host and battlefield,  
 For who would dare to go to fight with him ?  
 Who ever contemplated such dispute ?  
 Now by the Judge that fashioned sun and moon,  
 Night, day, and all the process of the sky,  
 The signet-ring and throne, the steed and mace,  
 The sword and crown, shall see me never more  
 Unless I clear this matter up, and turn  
 Thy heart from harshness into tenderness,  
 By proving to thy clear soul that the hand  
 Of none hath put a period to his life.  
 What man in all the world can ’scape from death,  
 Though he be clad upon with steel and helm ?  
 For when the bright lamp faileth none may count  
 Another breath however brave he be.  
 If what I prove to thee content thee not,  
 By God, the Lord of all, my purpose is  
 To burn my body in the fire and gladden  
 My foemen’s souls.”

C. 1744

On hearing this, his mother  
 Had ruth upon his form majestical,  
 Lest that young hero should consume in fire

His body barely handselled of its soul,  
 And therefore said to him : " Show me the way  
 That prince Talhand died on his elephant.  
 Unless the matter be made clear to me  
 My fond heart still will burn."

Gav sought his palace  
 In sorrow, summoned his experienced sage,  
 Told what had passed and how his mother's words  
 Had angered him until he swore to burn.  
 They sat down and took counsel by themselves.  
 The sage spake thus : " My gracious sovereign !  
 We cannot by ourselves achieve thy wish.  
 Call we the famed and wise, both old and young,  
 Among the shrewdest seekers of the way  
 From every side—Kashmír, Dambar, Margh, Mái."

Gav sent off cavaliers to every quarter,<sup>1</sup>  
 Wherever there was any sage of leading.  
 They all came to the portal of the king,  
 Came to that famous court. He held a session  
 Of wise men and of magnates learned and shrewd.  
 Gav's sage described the battlefield and how  
 The prince and host had fought. They all conversed  
 With that sharp-witted man about the sea,  
 About the trench and letting in the water.  
 That darksome night not one among them slept,  
 But all held talk together. When the din  
 Of kettledrum ascended from the plain  
 Those men of wisdom called for ebony,  
 And two of them—ingenious councillors—  
 Constructed of that wood a board foursquare  
 To represent the trench and battlefield,  
 And with both armies drawn up face to face.  
 A hundred squares were traced upon the board,  
 So that the kings and soldiers might manœuvre.  
 Two hosts were carved of teak and ivory,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And two proud kings with crowns and Grace divine.  
 Both horse and foot were represented there,  
 And drawn up in two ranks in war-array,  
 The steeds, the elephants, the ministers,  
 And warriors charging at the enemy,  
 All combating as is the use in war,  
 One in offence, another in defence.  
 The king was posted at the army's centre,  
 With at one hand his loyal minister.

C. 1745 Next to the twain were placed two elephants,  
 Supporting thrones the hue of indigo.  
 Next to the elephants two camels stood,  
 Whereon two men of holy counsel sat.  
 Next to the camels there were placed two steeds,  
 With riders valiant on the day of battle,  
 And each wing ended in a warrior-rukh,  
 His liver's blood a-foam upon his lips.  
 The footman's move was always to advance,  
 That he might be of aidance in the fray,  
 Till, having passed across the battlefield,  
 He sat—a minister—beside the king ;  
 The minister might quit not too in battle  
 His king by more than by a single square,  
 While o'er three squares the noble elephant  
 Could move and for two miles survey the field.  
 The camel likewise moved three squares and raged  
 And snorted on the field of fight. The horse  
 Made too a three squares' move, but in the move  
 Alighted on a square of diverse hue.  
 The warrior-rukh might traverse every way,  
 And charge across the battle at his will.  
 They all contended in their proper lists,  
 And each observed the limits of his move.  
 When one of them beheld the king in fight,  
 Then would he shout and say : “Avaunt, O king ! ”  
 Whereat the king would change his square till he

Was straitened where he stood. When rukh and horse,  
 And minister and elephant and troops,  
 Had blocked the way for him on every side  
 The king would look forth o'er that field foursquare,  
 And see his men o'erthrown, their faces lined,  
 Escape cut off by water and by trench,  
 With foes to right and left and front and rear,  
 And being moveless and fordone would die,<sup>1</sup>  
 For so the process of the heaven decreed.

King Gav, the great and good, affected much  
 The game of chess suggested through Talhand ;  
 His mother studied it. Her heart was filled  
 With anguish for that prince. Both night and day  
 She sat possessed by passion and by pain,  
 With both her eyes intent upon the game.  
 Her whole desire and purpose centred there ;  
 Her mind was full of anguish for Talhand.  
 She kept for ever shedding tears of blood,  
 With chess to medicine her sufferings,  
 And thus she fared and neither ate nor stirred  
 Until her life had reached its period.

So now my tale is done that I heard told  
 With other stories of the days of old.

#### § 4

*How Núshírwán sent Barzwí, the Leech, to Hindústán to fetch a wondrous Drug, and how Barzwí brought back the Book of Kalila and Dimna*

Mark what Shádán, son of Barzín, revealed—  
 A matter that till then had been concealed :—  
 When Núshírwán was king of kings, and may  
 His fame endure throughout eternity,  
 He sought for sages learnéd in all lore

C. 1746

<sup>1</sup> Sháh mát (check mate).

To give a greater lustre to his court.  
 The whole world was beneath his sovereign rule—  
 The great men and the much experienced chiefs,  
 The doctors, with the eloquent and brave,  
 The interpreters, proved leaders, and withal <sup>1</sup>  
 A famous chief, the wearer of a crown.  
 This was Barzwí, the eloquent physician,  
 An orator and stricken well in years,  
 A man proficient in each branch of learning,  
 And for each branch acclaimed throughout the world.  
 One day Barzwí at audience-time drew near  
 The famous king, and said : “ O Sháh, the friend  
 Of knowledge, apt to seek it and retain !  
 I scanned with heed an Indian scroll to-day,  
 And there within 'twas written : ‘ On the mountains  
 Of Hind there is a herb like Rúman silk,  
 Which if the expert shall collect, prepare  
 According unto knowledge, and then strew  
 Upon the body of one dead, the corpse,  
 Good sooth, forthwith will speak.’ Now if the king  
 Permit I will adventure this hard journey,  
 And, with much lore to guide me on my way,  
 Achieve perchance this wondrous enterprise.  
 ’Tis fitting that the dead should come to life  
 When Núshírwán is monarch of the world.”

The Sháh made answer : “ Hardly this may be,  
 But ne'er the less the endeavour should be made.  
 Convey my letter thither to the Rája,  
 And look upon the attractions of that land.  
 Seek for a comrade in the enterprise,  
 As well as wakeful fortune’s comradeship.  
 Thou wilt reveal some wonder to the world,  
 Because the words are enigmatical.  
 Bear to the Rája worthy offerings,  
 For doubtless he must furnish thee with guides.”

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Then Núshírwán unlocked his treasury,  
 And of the havings that are fit for kings<sup>1</sup>—  
 Dínárs, brocade, silks, beaver-skins, and signets,  
 Crowns, musk, and spicery, with armlets too,  
 With royal jewelry, and torques and earrings—  
 He had three hundred camel-loads made ready.  
 The envoy left the presence and, on reaching  
 The Rája, gave the letter, and unpacked  
 The bales before him, who, when he had read  
 The letter of the Sháh, said thus : “ Good sir !  
 Hath not my wealth been given by Núshírwán ?  
 Our persons, troops, and royal treasures  
 Are one. ’Twere not strange if the pious world-lord,  
 By reason of his justice, throne, and Grace,  
 His splendid fortune and his high achievement,  
 Should raise the dead. The Brahmans on the moun-  
 tains

Are all at thy dispose. My minister,  
 An idol-worshipper of high degree,  
 My noble treasurer and hoarded wealth,  
 With Hindústán and all its good and ill,  
 And all my power o’er great and small, are thine.”

They lodged the envoy with magnificence  
 Hard by the Rája as his rank required,  
 Providing him with provand, tapestries,  
 With dainty raiment and with carpetings.  
 All night the Rája held talk with the priests,  
 The great men of Kannúj and with the sages,  
 And when the daylight showed above the hills,  
 And when the world-illumining Lamp appeared,  
 He called the learned physicians and all those  
 Best qualified by knowledge to advise,  
 And bade them wait upon the learned Barzwi  
 To hear his statement. All the erudite,  
 Adept in leechcraft, went to him and, when

C. 1747

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

He set forth to the mountains, fared with him.  
 Barzwí roamed all the mountain-tops afoot,  
 Companioned by his learnéd guides, and culled ]  
 The divers herbs—the dry, the succulent,  
 The withered, and the flourishing, He brayed  
 Herbs succulent and dry of every kind,  
 And spread them on the dead, but none revived  
 For any herb, and verily it seemed  
 That all the virtue had gone out of them.  
 The company roamed all the heights afoot,  
 But had no fruit from travail, and Barzwí  
 Then understood : “ This task is for the King  
 That liveth and that reigneth evermore.”

Thoughts of the Sháh, of those illustrious chiefs,  
 And that long journey, moved his heart to shame.  
 He thought too of the wealth that he had brought,  
 And was concerned at all his senseless talk.  
 He was chagrined about the scroll and said :—  
 “ Why did that ignorant and stupid man  
 Write in his folly and his levity  
 That which produceth travail and foul words ? ”

C. 1748      Thereafter he addressed those sages thus :—  
 “ Ye chiefs experienced and worshipful !  
 Know ye of one more learnéd than yourselves,  
 One eminent in every company ? ”

The troop of sages said with one accord :—  
 “ There dwelleth here a very ancient man,<sup>1</sup>  
 Surpassing us in wisdom and in years,  
 And in his knowledge besting every chief.”

Thereat Barzwí said to those men of Hind :—  
 “ Ye men of high renown and ardent soul !  
 Exert yourselves yet more on my behalf,  
 And point me out the way to him. Perchance  
 That eloquent old sage may succour me  
 In this affair.”

They led Barzwí to him,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Full of solicitude, with much to say.  
 Now when Barzwí, that man of eloquence,  
 Approached the sage and told all his own toils,  
 About the writing that he had discovered,  
 And of the experts' words, the ancient sage  
 Replied, informing him at large, and said :—  
 “ We in those writings found the selfsame thing,  
 We too were instant in the same desire.  
 Now will I tell thee our discovery :  
 The noble heart must hear to understand.  
 The herb then is the sage, the mountain know-  
 ledge,  
 As being ever distant from the throng ;  
 The corpse the man whose knowledge is to seek,  
 Because the unwise are kill-joys everywhere.  
 In sooth 'tis knowledge that doth make men live ;  
 Blest is the constant toiler for its sake.  
 When men are stupefied through ignorance<sup>1</sup>  
 Kalila<sup>2</sup> is the herb, and understanding  
 The mountain. In the monarch's treasury,  
 On making quest there, thou wilt find a book  
 Of knowledge that will point thee out the way.”

Barzwí, when he had heard, rejoiced thereat,  
 And all his travail seemed like wind to him.  
 He blessed the sage and sped back to the king,  
 Like fire. Arrived he praised the Rája, saying :—  
 “ Live thou while Hind shall last. There is a  
 book,  
 O potent Rája ! that in Indian  
 Is called Kalila.<sup>3</sup> It is under seal,  
 And fondly treasured in the monarch's hoards—  
 A guide-book both to knowledge and to counsel.  
 Kalila is the herb in mystic parlance ;  
 So now, O king of Hind ! be thou mine aid,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Being, like the sage, a teacher of knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> Reading with P.

And, if I be not troublesome, command  
Thy treasurer to hand the book to me."

The Rája's soul was sad at that request,  
He writhed upon his throne and answered thus  
Barzwí : " No one has sought of us this thing  
In times of yore or in these latter days.  
However if the world-lord Núshírwán  
Shall ask of me my body or my soul  
I will withhold not from him aught that is  
In being whether high or low ; albeit  
Thou shalt peruse it not save in my presence,  
That spirits ill-disposed to me may say not  
Within their hearts : ' Some one hath copied it.'  
So read and learn and mark it every way."

Barzwí made answer thus and said : " O king !  
Thou hast expressed my whole intent herein."

The Rája's minister then brought Kalíla ;  
Barzwí perused it with a sage's help,  
And, as he read each chapter of the book,  
He spent the day in learning it by heart,  
For, having read as much as he could learn,  
He read no further till the morrow came,  
But, writing to the monarch of the world,  
Sent privily a chapter of Kalíla.  
The Indians' book by this expedient  
Was introduced to royal Núshírwán,  
What while Barzwí continued hale and happy,  
By laving thus his ardent soul in knowledge,  
Until the answer to his letters came :—  
" The Sea of Lore hath come to hand for us."

Then from his palace he approached the Rája  
To ask for leave to go. At that request  
The Rája graciously entreated him,  
And had prepared an Indian robe of honour—  
Two valuable armlets and two earrings,  
A torque of jewels worthy of a king,

An Indian turban and an Indian sword,  
 Whereof the blade was watered steel. Barzwí  
 Came from Kannúj, rejoicing, having gained  
 Much knowledge there. On his return to court  
 He went before the Sháh and did obeisance,  
 Then told about his converse with the Rája,  
 How knowledge had been found instead of herbs.  
 The Sháh replied : "O man approved in all !  
 Kalila hath restored my soul to life.  
 Take from my treasurer my treasury's key,  
 And make thy choice according to thy needs."

So to the treasury the sage departed,  
 But gave small trouble to the treasurer.<sup>1</sup>  
 There drachms and jewels lay to left and right,  
 And yet he chose him but a royal robe,  
 Put on that costly raiment and went forth  
 Back to the court of Núshírwán in haste.  
 When he approached the throne he did obeisance,  
 And praised the king, who said : "O man of toils !  
 Why hast thou left the treasury and brought  
 No purses with thee and no royal gems,  
 For treasure is the meed of them that travail ? "

Barzwí replied : "O thou whose crown is higher  
 Than sun and moon ! the wearer of king's  
 raiment

Hath access to the crown and throne of might,  
 And furthermore, when people shall behold  
 Mine own unworthy self in royal robes,  
 My foes' hearts will be strait and overcast,  
 My friends' cheeks keep their lustre and their  
 bloom.

Still there is somewhat I would ask the king  
 That I may leave my memory in the world—  
 Let Búzurjmihr, when copying the book,  
 Show favour to Barzwí's endeavourment,

C. 1750

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And give account of me in Chapter One,  
 By order of the conquering king, that so,  
 When I am dead, my travailing may be  
 Forgot not by the sages in the world."

"A great thing this to ask!" the Sháh replied,  
 "And one beyond the licence of a liege,  
 And yet thy labour hath deserved as much,  
 Although thy standing warranteth it not."

Then said the Sháh to Búzurjmihr : "This wish  
 Of his is not to be ignored."

So when

The fashioning of pen from kex was done  
 The scribe wrote of Barzwí in Chapter One.

As for the royal book which thus was writ  
 'Twas in the script of bygone centuries ;

Among the royal hoards men treasured it,  
 But 'twas beheld not by unworthy eyes.

It was perused not, till the people took  
 To Arabic, save in the ancient tongue ;  
 But when Mámún had made earth fresh and young

He dealt in other fashion with the book,  
 For he had clerkly lore, was politic

In kingly wise, and learned in every way.  
 'Twas then translated into Arabic,

Just as thou mayest hear it read to-day.  
 In Arabic, till Nasr was king, it stayed ;

Then noble Abú'l Fazl, his minister  
 And, in respect to lore, his treasurer,  
 Gave orders, which were readily obeyed,<sup>1</sup>  
 For folk to speak in Persian and Dari.<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter precedent and policy  
 Conducted Nasr in wisdom's way when he  
 Was fain by whatsoever means might be  
 To leave within the world his memory.

<sup>1</sup> "mais son pouvoir fut de courte durée" (Mohl).

<sup>2</sup> The more ornate Persian used at court.

They held a session with interpreters,  
Who read the whole book out to Rúdagí.<sup>1</sup>

That poet linked the scattered words in verse,  
And threaded <sup>2</sup> thus those pregnant pearls, that he

Who is a scholar might new graces find,  
And one unlearnéd more facility,

For words in prose escape us, but combined

In metric guise possess the brain and mind.

Life to Mahmúd, the world's great potentate !

May earth and time as slaves before him wait,  
How it would joy the heart if but the bad

From Sháh Mahmúd less free allowance had !

Yet be not thou concerned thereat. Anon,  
Since life is far advanced, thou must be gone.

Thou hast thine ups and downs from day to day,

C. 1751

At whiles assistance and at whiles dismay ;

But neither of them will for aye remain

With thee ; the hope of tarriance here is vain.

<sup>1</sup> Rúdaki in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Literally " pierced."



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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 396 note.

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 396 *note*.







